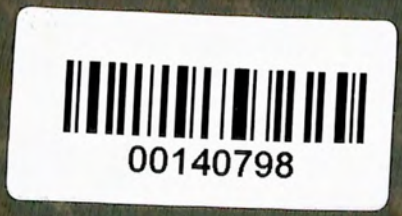
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THE

PRIVATE LIFE

OF

AN EASTERN KING.

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BY

A MEMBER OF THE HOUSEHOLD
OF HIS LATE MAJESTY, NUSSIR-U-DEEN, KING OF OUDE.

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PREFACE.

THE following narrative is a record of facts—not in any case fictitious. It has been compiled from the notes I took of passing events during the three and a half years that I lived in the court of Lucknow.

Nussir-u-deen has long been gathered to his fathers; but the principal European members of his household are still alive, and in England. I have not given their names or my own; for the public would know as little of the one as of the other, had I done so. Should the truth of my statements be denied, however, or the names considered necessary to substantiate the narrative, I shall have no hesitation in giving them all.

That the professional author and the professional critic will find much that is crude and unartistic in the work, I do not doubt. Making no pretensions to literary skill, I trust I shall not be censured for displaying so little. If my "round, unvarnished tale" has been delivered in readable English, it is all to which I have aspired. Moreover, dread critic, I by no means profess to be a profound orientalist. Some years have now rolled away since I left India; and, when there, I never knew more of the vernacular

Hindustani than was just sufficient to enable me to make my way from place to place, and transact the ordinary business of life.

It would have been easy for me to have thrown something of the heroic into the account of my own residence at the court of Lucknow; but I have adhered simply to the truth, and have endeavoured solely to describe the inner life of the palace as I found it. Much there was that was strange—much there was that was horrible about that life; I witnessed many scenes which I could not describe without offending against conventional propriety; but, in all that the reader will find recorded, exaggeration has been strictly guarded against.

Finally, this book has not been written with any political object. That Oude is one of the most miserably-governed countries under heaven, is no secret; and that it would be a blessing to its numerous inhabitants were the Indian government to do for it what has been so well done for the Punjab, every one will admit. I have not written a political disquisition, but simply a personal narrative; and therefore the state of the country is but incidentally alluded to occasionally in the following pages.

My task is done.

London, May 1855.

THE PRIVATE LIFE

OF

AN EASTERN KING.

CHAPTER I.

MY INTRODUCTION TO ROYALTY.

Aspect of Lucknow—Armed citizens—Beasts of burden—Oude a province and a kingdom—The Durbar—Private audience with the king—The Nuzza—The troubles of royalty—Studies—The barber—Drawing near the dinner-hour.

It is now more than twenty years since business first took me to Lucknow. Nussir-u-deen, the son and successor of Ghazi-u-deen, the first king, was then upon the throne of Oude.

Strange tales I had heard in Calcutta of the peculiar features of Lucknow and its court—of the extensive menagerie maintained by the king—of his fondness for Europeans

not in the Company's service—of the warlike tastes and bearing of the inhabitants of Oude, and the abundance of matchlocks, spears, shields, and swords, to be seen borne by fierce-looking fellows in the streets of Lucknow. I had heard much of all these things, and expected to be disappointed, as I had been before frequently. I was *not* disappointed, however. For once the reality exceeded my anticipation.

The great extent of the buildings, generally called the king's palace, surprised me in the first place. It was not properly a palace, but a continuation of palaces stretching all along the banks of the Goomty, the river on which Lucknow is built. In this, however, the royal residence in Oude but resembled what one reads of the seraglio at Constantinople, the Khan's residence at Teheran, and the imperial buildings of Pekin. In all oriental states the palaces are not so much the abode of the sovereign only, as the centre of the government;—little towns, in fact, containing extensive lines of buildings occupied by the harem and its vast number of attendants, containing courts, gardens, tanks, fountains, and squares, as well as the offices

of the chief ministers of state. Such was the case in Lucknow. One side of the narrow Goomty—a river not much broader than a middling-sized London street—was lined by the royal palace; the other was occupied by the *rumna*, or park, in which the menagerie was maintained. The extent of this collection of animals, and its variety, exceeded any thing that I had supposed possible. Elephants in scores, tigers, rhinoceroses, antelopes, cheetahs or hunting-leopards, lynxes, Persian cats, Chinese dogs, might all be seen sunning themselves in this park, either in their cages, or stretched listlessly on the grass, as commonly as sheep and cows in an English meadow.

There was nothing grand or striking about the exterior of the palace—the Fureed Buksh, as it is called. Its extent was the only imposing feature about it, and struck me far more forcibly than any magnificence of architecture or loftiness of structure would have done; for I was prepared for the latter, whilst for the former feature I was not prepared.

Nor did the streets of Lucknow disappoint me. The streets around the palace have been compared to Dresden by Bishop Heber; others have declared that Lucknow resembled Mos-

cow. I have never been in either city; but I should fancy they cannot be very like each other. The only large city, that I have been in, which resembles the lower part of the town, in its narrow streets, its laden camels, and its bazaars, is Grand Cairo in Egypt. Dresden, Moscow, Cairo,—there is room enough here for choice; and yet in all these no counterparts will be found to many of the most striking characteristics of Lucknow.

In the first place, with respect to the armed population, we shall find nothing similar in any of these places. The people of Moscow may wear knives about their persons, and in Cairo you may occasionally see men with arms in their hands; but in Lucknow every man goes armed. With matchlock or gun or pistol most probably, with a short bent sword called a *tulwar* and a shield certainly, you find every man in Lucknow pass you by. Even those engaged in the ordinary business of life have their tulwars; whilst the idlers have both pistols and shield as well, however otherwise mean their attire. The shield of buffalo-hide, with brass knobs for the most part, is usually thrown up upon the left shoulder; and with the fierce-looking moustaches of the Raj-

poots and Patans, and the black beards of the Mussulmans, tulwar and shield together give an eminently warlike air to the swaggering figures of the self-sufficient citizens. Nor is it wonderful that the population of Lucknow should be warlike in its aspect; for Oude is the great nursery of soldiers for the Company's army. The forces of the Bengal presidency come almost exclusively from Oude.

The love of arms is fostered from infancy in the inhabitants of Lucknow. An arrow or a spear is the usual plaything of the boys there; small wooden models of tulwars and pistols are put into the hands of the babies, just as English nurses give their children rattles to play with.

The streets of the town presented therefore an eminently novel aspect to me. It was as if I had found myself transported suddenly into some of the scenes of which I had read in childish histories and novels, in which all the men are heroes, and show their heroism in their gait and manners.

Nor in Cairo or Moscow would you find elephants used as the ordinary beasts of burden. Nothing can be more ludicrous than the incongruity between the huge animals and the nar-

row confined streets in which they have to travel. One of them blocks up the entire road; just as the laden camel, with his huge net at either side, full of goods, does in Cairo. In Lucknow elephants and camels are almost equally common. In the lower and filthier parts of the town, where the bazaars abound, horses are seldom seen, elephants and camels are the common labourers. For a long time I could not see an elephant or a laden camel sweeping down one of these narrow lanes without feeling an almost irresistible inclination to laugh aloud, even when I was endangering my own safety by remaining exposed too long.

Then there is the contrast, too, between the Hindoo and the Mussulman population, resembling each other only in the arms which they carry—in every other respect unlike. Lucknow is a city of about 300,000 inhabitants, of whom two-thirds are probably Hindoos, generally of the lower orders; the Mussulman population is somewhat aristocratic, for the court is Mussulman.

But perhaps my readers know nothing of the country of which Lucknow is the capital. In a few words I shall be able to give them

some definite information on the subject. That there is a sauce called "the King of Oude's sauce," and that

"the King of Oude is mighty proud,"

are two facts which may be learned from the shop-windows in London, and from that veracious chronicler, Charles O'Malley,* respectively.

When Lord Wellesley went out to India as governor-general, towards the end of the last century, Oude was larger than England. It had been a province of the Great Mogul empire, and its ruler was called the Nawab Vizier. Warren Hastings, by plundering two of the female members of the Nawab's family, and torturing their attendant eunuchs to extort treasure from them, had made the Nawab of Oude known to quiet people in England some years before; for Burke had thundered forth his indignant denunciations of Hastings' conduct, and the Nawab of Oude was looked upon in Europe as an ill-used gentleman: the fact being, that he was delighted his predecessor's widows, the Bhow Begum and another, should

* *Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon,* by C. Lever. *Oude* is properly pronounced as rhyming with *proud;* not as if spelt Oode, as the geographers often tell us.

have been plundered, and not he; for he was only his predecessor's son by adoption.

When Lord Wellesley went to India, as I have said, Oude was larger than England, and had always been the most faithful ally of the British. His lordship rewarded its fidelity by annexing half of it to the Bengal presidency. He could not find any better way of recompensing the people for the good faith of their rulers than by putting them under his own government.

The Marquis of Hastings *borrowed* two crores of rupees from Ghazi-u-deen, that is, two millions of pounds sterling, and, in return for the loan, gave the Nawab a barren tract of land at the foot of the Himalayas called the Terai—a tract conquered from Nepaul—and with it the title of king: *His Highness the Nawab* was changed into *His Majesty the King;* and Ghazi was fain to be content, or at all events to appear so.* It was in 1819 that Ghazi

* I have only related above what is matter of history. "Most assuredly," says a writer who urges the annexation of all Oude, "most assuredly Warren Hastings, Lord Teignmouth, Lord Wellesley, Lord Hastings, and Lord Auckland, would never have acted in private life as they did in the capacity of governor-general towards prostrate Oude."—*Calcutta Review*, vol. iii. p. 376.

became the anointed of the Company; and in 1827 he was succeeded by his son, Nussir, a young man of about thirty years of age when I visited Lucknow.

In its present contracted dimensions Oude is a triangular piece of country, stretching from Nepaul to the Ganges; its broader portions skirting Nepaul upon the north, its narrower end resting upon the sacred river on the south. It slopes gradually from north-west to south-east, the only high land it contains being the strip so generously given up by the Marquis of Hastings after the Nepaulese war. This district, the Terai, is very populous—with wild beasts; and is rich—in jungle.

Stripped as it has been of its rupees and its most valuable provinces by successive governors-general, Oude is still more populous than any of the German states in Europe, except Prussia and Austria; whilst in extent it exceeds that of Denmark; of Holland and Belgium put together; of Switzerland, Saxony, and Wirtemberg, could they be united. In Europe it would be a country superior to any of these, rivalling Bavaria or Naples in importance; in Asia it is considered as a mere

trifle, about which a great deal too much has already been said.

It was private business, as I have already stated, that took me to Lucknow. I went there in the ordinary routine of mercantile life, not as an "adventurer"—a name once so hateful to the Honourable Company. Through a friend at court I solicited and obtained an audience of his majesty, more through curiosity to see what an Indian sovereign was like than from any other motive. Since Delhi has been shorn of its splendour, and become a dilapidated burlesque of what it once was, there is no native court in India to vie with that of Oude in wealth and magnificence. The fact of my not having been presented by the resident—the English officer appointed by the Indian government to watch British interests in Oude, and to keep the king in order—my not having been presented by the resident, I say, probably induced the king to look upon me with a favourable eye. I got a hint that there was an office in the king's household vacant, and that if I met his majesty, and offered the usual present, I might be accepted and appointed to it.

No European can be taken into the King of Oude's service without the sanction—really, the permission—of the resident. My next aim was, therefore, to obtain this sanction. I was introduced to "the great saheb"—a man whom, perhaps, you would jostle in London as if he were only an ordinary mortal, and yet who exercised a more unlimited sway over a king and court and five millions of people than any sovereign in Europe. I was introduced; a few letters passed between us; the sanction was given; and, under the conditions that I was not to meddle or intermeddle, in any way whatsoever, in the politics of Oude,—not to mix myself up in the intrigues for power between rival ministers, or in the quarrels of warring zemindars (large landed proprietors), —I was permitted to take service under his majesty of Oude.

These preliminaries to my appointment arranged, I was to appear before the king again —this time in private. No one must approach an eastern monarch empty-handed. A nuzza, or present, must always be offered, and is offered by every one, even at the ordinary levees, the king returning another of greater value subsequently. On the former occasion it was

in full durbar that I had seen his majesty, seated on his throne, at the end of a long hall. I had expected to see him sitting cross-legged on a cushion. He was in a gilt or golden arm-chair, with a rich oriental dress on him certainly, and a crown, ornamented with feathers from the bird of paradise, upon his head; but still with a much more European air about him, and about the apartment, than I had expected. Then, however, I caught but a glimpse of all this; even his majesty's face I did not well see. On the present occasion, however, when I was to have a private interview, he was walking with some members of his household (Europeans) in a garden of the palace.

I remained at the end of a walk to await his arrival. My present (five gold mohurs*) rested on the open palm of my hand, a fine muslin handkerchief being thrown over the hand, between it and the pieces of gold. The palm of the left hand supported the right, on which the muslin handkerchief and the money were placed. In that attitude I awaited his majesty. It was my first lesson in court etiquette; and I could not help thinking, as I

* A gold mohur is equal to 16 rs., or 32*s*.

stood thus, that I looked very like a fool. My hat was resting on a seat hard by. I was uncovered, of course; and the day was sunny and hot. Before the king came round, I was in an extempore bath. At length the party approached. His majesty was dressed as an English gentleman, in a plain black suit, a London hat on his head. His face was pleasing in its expression, of a light, a very light sepia tint. His black hair, whiskers, and moustache contrasted well with the colour of the cheeks, and set off a pair of piercing black eyes, small and keen. He was thin, and of the middle height. As he approached, he conversed in English with his attendants. What they were talking about I forget, although I heard their conversation; I was too much taken up with myself, in fact, to pay much attention to it.

The king drew near, smiled as he approached me, put his left hand under mine, touched the gold with the fingers of his right hand, and then observed:

"So you have decided on entering my service?"

"I have, your majesty," was my reply.

"We shall be good friends. I love the English."

So saying, he passed on, resuming his former conversation. I joined the attendants.

"Put your gold mohurs up at once," whispered my friend, "or some of the natives will take them."

They were slipped into my pocket forthwith. I took up my hat, and followed the party into the palace.

The rooms were generally large, and were ornamented with rich chandeliers and gaudily-framed pictures in great numbers. Generally speaking, there was too great a crowding of objects in each. The effect was to bewilder rather than to please. Rich lustres and chandeliers, cabinets of rare woods, of ivory, or lacquered ware, suits of armour, jewelled arms, and richly-decorated shields, were to be seen on all sides. There was too great a profusion of such things.

The dining-room, the private dining-room, —that used by the king when he had his intimate friends around him,—was the only neat room in the palace. It was not overcrowded; it differed from an English dining-room in no

essential particular. Once a-month his majesty gave a public breakfast to the British officers of his regiments, who came for that purpose from the cantonments, situated five miles from Lucknow, on the other side of the Goomty. Public dinners were also occasionally given to the resident and his friends; but all these formal parties were very irksome to the king.

"Thank God!" I have heard him repeatedly say, after being released from these ceremonious parties,—"thank God, they are all gone! Now let us have a glass of wine in peace. Boppery bopp,* but how stupid these things are!" And with that his majesty would yawn and stretch himself, and take off his jewelled cap and toss it to the other end of the room.

On the first evening of my arrival at the palace, the king held one of his private dinners. Five European members of his household usually attended these. One was nominally the king's tutor, employed to teach him English. The king valorously resolved over and over again to give up an hour a-day to

* A common native exclamation, similar to "Oh, dear me!" or something of that kind.

study; for he was anxious to speak English fluently. As it was, he was often obliged to eke out his sentences with a Hindostanee word. I have seen his majesty sit down by the tutor, some books on the table before them—

"Now, master"—(he always called his tutor "master")—"now, master, we will begin in earnest."

The tutor would read a passage from the *Spectator*, or from some popular novel, and the king would read it after him. The tutor would read again—

"Boppery bopp, but this is dry work!" would his majesty exclaim, stretching himself, when it came to his turn to read again; "let us have a glass of wine, master."

The glass of wine led to conversation, the books were pushed away, and so the lesson ended. Such lessons seldom occupied more than ten minutes. The tutor got about fifteen hundred pounds a-year for giving them.

His tutor, then, was one of the king's friends; his librarian was another; his portrait-painter was a third; the captain of his body-guard was a fourth; and last, but by no means least, his barber—his European barber—was a fifth. Of these five I was one.

The barber was the greatest man of the five. His influence was far greater than the native prime minister, or Nawab. He was known to be an especial favourite, and all men paid court to him. His history, truly and honestly written, would form one of the oddest chapters of human life. All that I knew of him was this:—

He had come out to Calcutta as cabin-boy in a ship. Having been brought up as a hairdresser in London, he had left his ship, on arriving in Calcutta, to resume his old business. He was successful; he pushed and puffed himself into notoriety. At length he took to going up the river with European merchandise for sale; he became, in fact, what is called there a river-trader. Arrived at Lucknow, he found a resident,—not the same who was there when I entered the king's service,—anxious to have his naturally lank hair curled like the governor-general's. The governor-general was distinguished by his ringlets; and the governor-general is, of course, "the glass of fashion and the mould of form" in India. The resident would be like him; and the river-trader was not above resuming his old business. Marvellous was the altera-

tion he made in the resident's appearance; and so the great saheb himself introduced the wonder-working barber to the king. That resident is in England now, and writes M.P. after his name.

The king had peculiarly lank, straight hair; not the most innocent approach to a curl had ever been seen on it. The barber wrought wonders again, and the king was delighted. Honours and wealth were showered upon the lucky *coiffeur*. He was given a title of nobility. *Sofraz Khan* ("the illustrious chief") was his new name, and men bowed to him in Oude. The whilom cabin-boy was a man of power now, and wealth was rapidly flowing in upon him. The king's favourite soon becomes wealthy in a native state. The barber, however, had other sources of profit open to him besides bribery: he supplied all the wine and beer used at the king's table. Every European article required at court came through his hands, and the rupees accumulated in thousands. "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?" is a question as apt now in every oriental court as it was when the Jewish queen* recorded it.

* Esther.

Nussir put no bounds to the honours he heaped upon the fascinating barber; unlimited confidence was placed in him. By small degrees he had at last become a regular guest at the royal table, and sat down to take dinner with the king as a thing of right; nor would his majesty taste a bottle of wine opened by any other hands than the barber's. So afraid was his majesty of being poisoned by his own family, that every bottle of wine was sealed in the barber's house before being brought to the king's table; and before he opened it, the little man looked carefully at the seal to see that it was all right. He then opened it, and took a portion of a glass first, before filling one for the king. Such was the etiquette at the royal table when I first took my place at it.

The confidence reposed in the favourite was, of course, soon generally known over India, or at all events in Bengal. The "low menial," as the *Calcutta Review* called him,* was the subject of squibs, and pasquinades, and attacks, and satirical verses without number; and marvellously little did the low menial care what they said of him, as long as he accumulated rupees. They had the wit and

* Art. "Kingdom of Oude," vol. iii.

the satire, and he had the money; so far he was content.

Of the newspapers, the most incessant in its attacks on the barber was the *Agra Uckbar*, a paper since defunct. Shortly before I left Lucknow, he employed a European clerk in the resident's office to answer the attacks of the *Uckbar* in one of the Calcutta papers with which he corresponded; and for this service the clerk was paid 100 rs. (10*l.*) a-month. So that, if the barber had not his own poet, like the tailors in London, he had, at all events, his own correspondent, like the *Times*.

On my introduction to the private dining-table of royalty, it may be easily supposed, therefore, that the two persons whom I was most anxious to see and to become acquainted with were the king and the barber; but I have delayed so long upon the threshold, that I must throw the dinner into another chapter.

CHAPTER II.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF A KING.

The private dinner—Etiquette—Female attendants—The barber's office—After dinner—Nautches—The puppet-show—Royal wit—The gauze curtain—The lake pavilion—Games with royalty—An illustration from Europe—Slippers *versus* turbans—Leap-frog—Snow-balling.

We awaited the king in an ante-room; and a little before nine o'clock, the usual dinner-hour in the palace, he made his appearance, leaning on the arm of his favourite, the barber. Of the two the king was much the taller, the favourite incomparably the more muscular and healthy-looking. One of those little men indeed was this favourite, who make up in breadth what they want in height. His majesty was dressed, as he had been in the garden, in a plain black English suit, a dress-coat having replaced the frock he wore on the former occasion. An ordinary black silk neck-tie, and patent-leather boots, completed his costume. He was a gentlemanly-looking man, not with-

out a certain kingly grace—his air and figure a complete contrast to that of his companion, on whom nature had indelibly stamped the characteristics of vulgarity. Both were dressed similarly; and the contrast they presented was made all the more striking by the outward habiliments in which they resembled each other.

The scene in the dining-room, as we took our places at the table, was a strange one—a strange mixture of occidental comforts and oriental display. The king was seated in a gilt arm-chair, raised a few inches above the level of the floor. He occupied the middle of one side of the table, and we sat on either hand. The opposite side of the table was left unoccupied, partly for the convenience of the servants when removing and placing dishes on the table, but chiefly that his majesty might see without difficulty whatever entertainments there were for the evening's amusement.

We had no sooner taken our seats, than half-a-dozen female attendants, richly dressed and of great beauty, came from behind a gauze curtain or screen that occupied one end of the room. I was warned not to gaze upon these ladies too curiously, as they were supposed to be kept from the eyes of man, like other ladies

of the harem; supposed so only, however. During the evening I found many opportunities of regarding them without subjecting myself to observation, or without appearing to take any notice of them.

They were all young and handsome. Their colour was of the brunette tint of an Andalusian belle, not darker; and their jet-black hair, taken back from the forehead, and twisted in rolls behind, ornamented with pearls and silver pins, formed a pleasing contrast with the delicate tint of their skin, and the flush of excitement which tinged their cheeks. An outer covering of thin semi-transparent cloth, richly embroidered, was thrown over the form, and partially rested upon the back of the head. The outlines of the shoulders were quite distinct through the thin envelopes in which they were enrobed, all more or less transparent. The heaving of the chest, as they waved gently fans, made of the peacock's feathers, backwards and forwards over the king, was beautiful to see. The lower portion of the person was hidden in wide *pyjamas*, or Turkish trousers, made of satin, of a bright crimson or purple colour. These pyjamas fitted closely to the waist, and gradually became looser and more voluminous

as they descended. They were collected above the ancle with gold-embroidered belts, corresponding to those dimly seen through the gauze cloak at the waist.

They took their stations noiselessly behind the king's chair. He made no remark. No one seemed to regard them at all. It was the ordinary routine of the dinner-table; nothing more. Their arms were bare nearly to the shoulder; and as they waved their feathery fans gently about, two at a time, gracefully drawing them in succession above and about the king's chair, it was a sight worth seeing. If the females of India excel in any species of physical beauty, it is particularly in the fine mould of the limbs. A statuary might have taken those delicately-shaped arms and hands as models for his Venus. There they plied their graceful task silently and monotonously the whole evening, fanning and attending to the king's hookah by turns, relieving each other in regular succession, until his majesty left the table, or (as was more generally the case) was carried from the table into his harem.

The dinner was altogether European in other respects. There was little to distin-

guish it from a fine dinner in a fine Calcutta house. The native servants came and went according to their wont,—careful, attentive, silent; we chatted and listened to the king. Soup, fish, joints, curry and rice, pastry and dessert, succeeded each other in the ordinary routine. The cookery was excellent; for a Frenchman presided in the royal kitchen,—a cook that had formerly been *chef-de-cuisine* in the Bengal Club in Calcutta. But neither the French cook nor the European coachman were allowed any liberty out of their respective stations; whilst the English barber was all in all. Such are the caprices of power!

Every bottle of wine of which the king partook was opened by the favourite, who quaffed a portion of a glass from the new bottle before he filled out for his majesty. Except in the case of champagne, every bottle was covered in the barber's house with an envelope, and sealed with his seal. Before he opened a bottle to supply his majesty, he looked at the seal, and removed the envelope himself. So afraid was the king of being poisoned, that he would trust nothing to the natives.

Mussulman though he was, Nussir stinted himself not in wine; nor, indeed, did the na-

tive nobility of Oude generally. I have heard his majesty declare more than once, that the Koran did not forbid the use of wine, as the vulgar supposed, but only the abuse of it. Other men were allowed the use, but a king might also be allowed the abuse,—such, I fancy, was his majesty's doctrine; for he seldom left the dining-table sober. The wines most usually set before us were claret, madeira, and champagne, all of excellent quality, and rendered delicious, amid the excessive heats of a large portion of the year, by being iced previously.

The dinner proceeded; and the wine was gradually rendering the king and his courtiers more free and easy.

"I have always loved Europeans," said his majesty aloud, and addressing us generally; "I have always loved Europeans, and the natives hate me. My family would poison me if they could; but they fear me too. Wallah, but how they fear me!"

"Your majesty has made them fear you," said the barber.

"I have; it is quite true," was the king's reply. Then turning to us on his left, he asked:

"You often see the people of Lucknow fighting with each other, don't you?"

"Too often, your majesty," was the reply.

"And killing each other?"

"Often killing each other."

"Ah, ha! so they do; but they never touch you, do they?"

"Never, your majesty."

"No; the wretches know too well that I would exterminate them if they did, I would. They know I love the Europeans, and they are wary."

The dessert came; the richest and most luscious fruits that tropical luxuriance produces were placed upon the table; and with the dessert the evening's amusements began. These amusements, I afterwards found, were very varied. Sometimes tumblers would exhibit their "calisthenic feats," as they would be called in a London play-bill,—men who appeared to have no bones in their bodies, but could tie themselves up in knots, walk any way but that in which nature intended, outdo the monkey in monkey-like tricks, and go away well pleased if people laughed at them. Sometimes the court jesters had a keen encounter of wits, accompanied with arrant buffoonery,

not unlike the performances of harlequin and pantaloon and clown in our pantomimes. Sometimes conjurors exhibited their feats of *diablerie* and snake-charming. Sometimes we had cock-fighting,—fights between quails or partridges on the table before his majesty. Sometimes a puppet-show was introduced, and the marionettes acted and danced spasmodically, like human beings in modern tragedies. With these there was generally a group of dancing-girls and attendant musicians performing somewhere in the room.

On my first appearance at the royal table, the amusements for the evening were a puppet-show and the usual nautch-girls. His majesty laughed heartily at the performances of the little burlesques of men and women; laughed heartily, and enjoyed himself. The barber saw that his majesty was pleased, and condescended to express his approbation also of the show. The nautch-girls exhibited their fine figures in graceful attitudes, advancing and retiring, now with one hand held over the head, now with the other. Their faces were not so captivating as those of the female attendants behind his majesty; but their forms were perfectly moulded, and they managed

their limbs with a graceful dexterity not to be surpassed. Voluptuous is, perhaps, the title that most correctly indicates the entire character of their performance. Attendant musicians played upon a species of lute and tamborine behind them, advancing and retreating with them, and accompanying the instruments with their voices. The instrumental seemed the principal part of the musical performance; the voice accompanied it, rather than it the voice.

But nothing of all this graceful attitudinising and profuse exhibition of fine forms was attended to by the king or his party. The nautch-girls danced, and their attendants played and sang; but no man regarded them, unless it was myself. The king was taken up with the puppet-show, and every one looked at it and praised it.

At length his majesty gave a whispered order to the barber, who went out, brought something in his hand, and gave it to the king. The regal chair was pushed back, and majesty condescended to advance to the front of the puppet-show, going round the table as if to inspect it more closely. The owners exerted themselves to give still more satisfaction, re-

garding their fortunes as made. The king watched for a little; his hand was advanced suddenly, and as suddenly drawn back, and one of the innocent marionettes fell motionless upon the stage. It was quite plain that his majesty had a pair of scissors in his hand, and had cut the string. The performers must have been as well aware of this as we were, but they gazed in affected wonder at the catastrophe. Natives of India require no training in simulation or dissimulation. The king turned round, his face beaming with fun, and looked at us knowingly, as much as to say, "Did I not do that well?" The barber laughed loudly in reply, and other courtiers joined in the chorus.

But this was not the whole of the royal wit. The hand was pushed forward and drawn back again and again; and again and again did one after the other of the puppets fall dead and immovable upon the stage, every successive fall eliciting a shout of laughter from the table, and a blank look of astonishment from the general manager of the show, who was visible directing and superintending. When nearly all had fallen, the royal wit was satisfied, returned to his chair, ordered a hand-

some present to be given to the owner of the show, and it was withdrawn.

During the rest of the evening the dancers and singers were criticised with more freedom than delicacy, the wine circulating freely, and his majesty indulging in it to a far greater extent than prudence would warrant.

It will not be supposed that during all this time I kept my eyes altogether away from the gauze curtain drawn across one end of the apartment. I had been told previously that some favourites of the harem were allowed by his majesty to witness the dinner-parties from behind that screen, and that it would be rude to be observed gazing intently at it. I found many opportunities, however, of inspecting it without violating etiquette. It was thick enough to prevent our recognising faces or figures behind, although we could see faintly the outline of shadowy masses of drapery passing to and fro. One principal figure was seated on a cushion,—the reigning favourite, doubtless; and her jewelled arms and neck glared brilliantly ever and anon as the light flashed upon them. We heard, too, a sweet feminine laugh, as the puppets were cut down, issuing from behind the screen; for although

we could not see distinctly through it on account of our distance from it, those on the other side no doubt could.

The revel proceeded; songs were sung. His majesty became gradually more and more affected with the wine he had taken, until his consciousness was almost gone; and he was then assisted by the female attendants and two sturdy eunuchs behind the curtain, and so off into the harem. It was astonishing how like a drunken king looked to an ordinary drunken unanointed man.

The next day I had an opportunity of inspecting that part of the palace open to my observation more fully than I had yet done. The same characteristics pervaded every portion of the interior, — too great a display of gilding and glass; all was gaudy and glittering, not beautiful. One portion, however, struck me as being singularly picturesque. It was a lake, a small artificial lake, that occupied almost the whole of a garden; and in the centre of it, entirely unconnected with the shores on any side, rose a neat pavilion, brilliantly painted externally, but of a picturesque form, with its pointed minarets and miniature domes. The water in the lake was perfectly

clear and transparent, and numbers of large gold and silver fish darted about in it with wonderful rapidity,—not the tiny fish we see paraded in glass globes or small reservoirs in England, but good sturdy fellows, of the most brilliant colours, and many of them a foot or a foot and a half long.

The pavilion in the centre of this sheet of water was reached by a boat, which was moored opposite the side of the palace whence we had issued. My companion and friend (like myself a courtier, but high in the king's esteem,) seated himself forthwith in the boat, and invited me to follow. The boatmen made their appearance at once, and we were taken across to the fairy-like house.

It was certainly the most elegant structure in Lucknow. It contained but two apartments of moderate size, both luxuriously fitted up, with divans running round the walls. In the centre of the larger apartment, on a table, stood a perfect model of the entire palace, wrought with all that elaborate minuteness of detail and perfection of colouring so characteristic of the Indian artists. The pavilion in which we stood was represented in this piece of carving by a miniature model not larger

than a walnut, and yet containing every spire, every little external ornament, and even the two rooms within.

Looking out upon the water from this little island palace was enough to make you fancy you had got into fairy-land. The brilliant fish playing about incessantly, the richly decorated boat, the flowers that bordered the lake, lost in bushes which almost hid the surrounding buildings, were all features so novel and so captivating, that I thought, were I the king, I should almost desert the palace for the pavilion. His majesty seldom visited it, however; and already marks of neglect were beginning to appear around and about it. At one time, as the attendants told me, he was fond of bringing some favourite of the harem over, the eunuchs rowing the boat; but of late years the pavilion seemed quite forgotten, and was consequently becoming neglected.

Not long after, the conversation at the dinner-table having accidentally turned upon the variegated fish, some one wondered how they would taste, or whether they were fit for food. The king maintained they were, and decided upon having some of them cooked. The following day they were placed upon the

table, and we partook of them. The flavour was not very agreeable; but even had it been delicious, they were so full of minute bones as to render it almost impossible to eat them. They were a thousand times worse in this respect than the *hilsa*, a fish noted in India for its bones.

My lessons in court etiquette came thick and fast upon each other. It was at a public breakfast,—that is, one of the formal breakfasts given by his majesty to the resident, his aides-de-camp, and some of the officers from the cantonments,—that the king turned suddenly round, at the conclusion of the entertainment, to a surgeon in the Company's service—let us call him Jones—

"Jones," said he, "will you play me a game of draughts?"

The king hated Jones, who was one of his own aides-de-camp, and loved to disconcert him.

"With great pleasure; I shall be honoured in playing with your majesty," was Jones's reply.

"For a hundred gold mohurs,"* said the king.

* Equal to 160*l.* A gold mohur was worth 16 rs., or 32*s.*, as I have before remarked.

"I cannot afford to play for a hundred gold mohurs, your majesty; I am but a poor man."

"Master," said the king, turning quickly round to the tutor, "will *you* play me at draughts for a hundred gold mohurs?"

"Your majesty honours me; I shall be delighted," replied the tutor, who, from being more intimate with the king, was better acquainted with his whims and eccentricities.

The board was brought—the men were placed—the game was commenced. I happened to be near, and watched it as it proceeded. Having played chess with the tutor previously, I felt convinced he must be an excellent draughts-player; but I soon found that though the king was playing badly, the tutor was playing far worse. It was a lesson in court etiquette. The king, I found, *must not be beaten.* Nay, badly as the tutor played, admirably pretending to be doing his best, I saw that it was with difficulty he contrived to let his majesty win; and I subsequently heard, that it was no uncommon thing for a friend to engage the king's opponent in conversation, whilst his majesty slily altered the position of some of the pieces!

The game was finished. The tutor was beaten.

"You owe me a hundred gold mohurs," said triumphant majesty.

"I do, your majesty; I shall bring them this evening."

"Don't forget," was majesty's reply, as he walked off to the harem.

That evening, when we assembled for dinner,—a private dinner of the king and the favoured five,—the first remark his majesty made was addressed to the tutor:

"Well, master, have you brought the gold mohurs?"

"I have, your majesty; they are below in my palanquin. Shall I bring them here?"

"Nonsense, master. Keep them. Send them home again. Do you think I want your money? Jones thought I wanted his. Did you see how the pig eat?* Wallah, but I hate him."

But was there no one to tell Jones, you ask perhaps, kind reader, of the king's ways? He who advised him to accept the next challenge

* The pig being an unclean animal amongst the Moslems, the epithet "pig" is the most abusive they can use.

he received might be the means of making him lose 160*l.*; for the king was so capricious, that his actions and conduct were not to be relied upon. Every member of the household, however, felt convinced that if money were taken from *him*, double its value would be returned as a present, although the result might have been very different in the case of a man whom the king disliked.

There was little difficulty, comparatively speaking, in allowing the king to win the games of chess or draughts. He played at both, played badly, and always won. It was the etiquette not to beat majesty in any thing. He frequently played with me; and I profited by the lesson I had received silently when witnessing his game with the tutor.

But when it came to billiards, allowing his majesty invariably to win was no such easy matter. It was then necessary to have a friend by to touch the balls slily occasionally, always in favour of the king and against his adversary,—now to keep one ball from the pocket, and to send an erring one into it. This must not be done too openly. It required considerable adroitness and skill; but as long as the player played his part well, the king was

content; that is, as long as he appeared unconscious of the frauds and annoyed at the results. It was then a joke, and his majesty laughed and was content.

All this may appear very childish and contemptible on the king's part, and I am not about to assert that it was otherwise; but if my readers therefore think that it was confined to the Lucknow palace,—that similar scenes do not take place in other palaces, and in more highly civilised countries than Oude,—they are mistaken. The courtier who would defeat his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias at draughts, or chess, or billiards, must be a bold man; and although that Emperor may be no child nor fool, yet depend upon it that some method is always found by which he may come off victorious. But this is only hypothetical; take an instance of kingly hunting, from real life, in Europe; and then say is it not truly as absurd as our humbugging of his swarthy Majesty of Oude—"Nussir-u-deen Hyder, the asylum and refuge of the world."

On St. Hubert's day, the 3d November, it is the custom of the Court of Berlin to have a boar-hunt at Grünewald. His majesty the

king of Prussia appears on the field in a rich suit of strongly contrasted colours,—a black velvet surcoat, with white kerseymere pantaloons. The rest of the field are in the usual scarlet and leather of our English meetings. A boar, duly prepared,—that is, *with clipped tusks*, lest any harm should be done,—is "started." An immense field follows,—king, dogs, attendants,—a motley group, containing very various specimens of human and equine and canine nature. At an easy canter away goes majesty, and at an easy canter follow the scarlet coats and the leathern continuations, the dogs doing the duty of the day in front. The boar is caught by the dogs, pulled down, incapable of resistance. Some members of the hunt leap from their saddles, and secure the dreadful wild beast, neck uppermost, the dogs being beaten and called of. His majesty draws near; a very elegant *couteau de chasse* is put into his hand; he dismounts, and advances to the boar. The *couteau de chasse* is drawn across the neck of the wild beast; loud shouts applaud his majesty for his courage, skill, and determination; and, full of his blushing honours, he canters back to the palace.

Royal life in the palace of Lucknow, and

in some of the courts of continental Europe, is not so different after all, you see.

The favour and intimacy which the European members of the household enjoyed were by no means pleasing to the higher native nobility of Oude,—nay, were altogether displeasing. This was natural enough; for the nawab, and the commander of the forces, and "the general" at the head of the police, Rajah Buktar Singh by name, of whom I shall have more to say hereafter, were all secondary beings when the barber was by.

"It is not right or proper for these gentlemen," urged the nawab, "to enter into the presence with their shoes and boots on. We never do. Your majesty is somewhat over-condescending in allowing it. Believe me, your majesty's august father, of happy memory, Ghazi-u-deen, the great and magnificent, would never have suffered it."

The king was taken aback for a moment at this bold speech from one usually so humble and so pliant; but Rushon-u-Dowlah had screwed his courage to the speaking-point, and was not to be answered with a look.

"Am I a greater man than the King of England, nawab?" asked his majesty.

"Your majesty is the greatest king in India,—greater than the Emperor of Delhi. May the asylum of the world live a thousand years!" Such was the wily courtier's evasive answer.

"Rushon-u-Dowlah," said the king, "am I a greater man than the King of England?"

"It is not for your majesty's servant to say that any one is greater than his lord."

"Listen to me, nawab; and you, general, listen to me. The King of England is my master; and these gentlemen would go into his presence with their shoes on. Shall they not come into mine, then? Do they come before me with their hats on? Answer me, your excellency."

"They do not, your majesty."

"No; that is *their* way of showing respect. *They* take off their hats, and *you* take off your shoes. But, come now, let us have a bargain. Wallah, but I will get them to take off their shoes and leave them without, as you do, if you will take off your turban and leave it without, as they do."

The nawab never said a word more on the subject. He was silenced. The loss of the turban is the greatest of indignities amongst

Mussulmans. "May my father's head be uncovered, if I do!" is no uncommon asseveration with them when urged to perform what they will not, or when anxious to show that the commission of an action is far from their thoughts.

The above conversation, which surprised us all so much that the king got his secretary to make a note of it—for every thing done at court is chronicled—will show that the king was no fool, when he allowed his judgment and his reason to guide him. It was only when governed by foolish whim or drunken caprice that he was childish and absurd—his draughts-playing and billiard-playing notwithstanding.

I have exhibited him now under several different aspects; and in the following pages he will play many more parts, good and bad. Before I conclude this chapter, however, I must give the reader a peep at two other royal sports—leap-frog and snow-balling.

We were in a large walled-in garden at Chaun-gunge, one of the park palaces, where animal fights often took place. The garden might have been some three or four acres in extent, and was surrounded with a high wall.

Some one had been describing the game of leap-frog to his majesty, or else he had seen some pictures of it, and it had taken his fancy mightily. The natives were left without the garden, the heavy gates were swung to, and majesty commanded that we should forthwith begin. The captain of the body-guard "made a back" for the tutor, the librarian stood for the portrait-painter. Away we went, like school-boys, beginning with very "low backs," for none of us were very expert in the game, but gradually "making backs" higher and higher. Tutor, barber, captain, librarian, portrait-painter—off we went like over-grown school-boys, now up, now down. It was hot work, I assure you.

The king, however, did not long stand a quiet spectator of the scene; he would try too. His majesty was very thin, and not over strong. I happened to be nearest him at the time; and he ran towards me, calling out. I "made a back" for him, and he went over easily enough. He was very light, and a good horseman, so that he succeeded in the vault: he then stood for me. I would have given a good deal to have been excused; but he would not have it so, and to have refused

would have been mortally to have offended him.

I ran, vaulted, down went the back, down I went with it; and his majesty the king and the author of these reminiscences went rolling together amongst the flower-beds. He got up annoyed—

"Boppery bopp, but you are as heavy as an elephant!" he exclaimed.

I was afraid he would have been in a passion; but he was not. The barber adroitly made a back for him forthwith, and over he went blithely. The tutor, a thin spare man, was the lightest of our party, and the king made a back for him, and succeeded in getting him safely over. It was then all right. Away they went, vaulting and standing, round and round, until majesty was tired out, and wanted iced claret to cool him. The game was frequently renewed afterwards.

But the snow-balling? asks some impatient reader. Well, I am coming to it.

It was about Christmas-time. Christmas is called in India the great day of the sahebs; and we were conversing about it in this very garden at Chaun-gunge, where the leap-frog had been first tried.

Christmas sports led to a description of what winter was; winter led to snow; snow to snow-balling. We described to his majesty the art and pastime of snow-balling as well as we could. To a man who had never seen snow, it was not very easy to describe it vividly.

The garden abounded with a large yellow flower, peculiar to India, the smaller varieties of which are used to ornament houses in Calcutta at Christmas-time. It is not quite so large as a dahlia, but somewhat similar in appearance. When snow-balling had been described to the king as well as we could describe it, he pulled three or four of these yellow flowers, and threw them at the librarian, who happened to be the most distant of the party. Like good courtiers, all followed the royal example; and soon every one was pelting right and left. These yellow flowers were our snow-balls, and we all entered into the game with hearty good-will. The king bore his share in the combat right royally, discharging three missiles for one that was aimed at him. He laughed and enjoyed the sport amazingly. Before we had concluded, we were all a mass of yellow leaves: they stuck about in our hair

and clothes, and on the king's hat, in a tenacious way. What the gardeners must have thought of the matter, when they came to set the garden to rights again, we did not stop to conjecture. It was enough that the king was amused. He had found out a new pleasure, and enjoyed it as long as those yellow flowers continued in bloom.

CHAPTER III.

THE HUNTING-PARTY.

A practical joke—The deserted palace—The encampment—The wild fowl—Royal shooting—The trained hawks—March forward—Hawking—Trained stags—The cheetah—The chase.

THE conversation having once turned at the king's table upon hunting and shooting, some one remarked that there was excellent sport to be obtained at a *jheel* or small lake only a few miles from Lucknow. The king was in a good and pleasant humour at the time, and remarked:

"I have heard of that *jheel;* let us go there and have some shooting. I want to see if I have any real sportsmen about me." Orders were given forthwith; and it was determined that we should meet at one of the palaces in the immediate neighbourhood of the sheet of water on the following day.

This palace, *Dil-kushar* (heart's-delight),

by name, was only a few miles from the walls of the town; so that in making our way thither, we expected of course to return as usual in the evening, and therefore made no arrangements for passing the night there. When we arrived, the king and his native retinue were already there. We expected the summons to attend his majesty to the *jheel;* but no such summons came. Wondering at the delay, we found the day gradually wearing away and evening approaching; we amusing ourselves with billiards in the meantime.

At the usual hour in the evening, about nine o'clock, we were summoned to dinner; and found his majesty, according to his wont, ready to do his part at the table in the eating and drinking line, particularly in the latter. No one liked to ask him why nothing had been said about the shooting, and he did not refer to the subject; so that, with the usual amount of drinking, and the usual dancing and singing, the night wore away.

It might have been about midnight. The king was gradually becoming affected by the quantity of wine he had taken. We were looking forward to his being carried into the harem, and to our release, when he suddenly

burst out laughing. There was no apparent cause for the laughter, and so we waited till he explained himself.

"It won't do to leave me here alone," said he at length; "this is a stupid place. You are married, and you"—(nodding to two members of our party)—"you may go home of course. I don't want to deprive your wives of your society for the night; but the rest must remain in attendance."

When we attended his majesty to any distance from Lucknow, we always took our beds with us—travelling beds such as are ordinarily used in India—and with them our servants, our wardrobes, and dressing paraphernalia. Where a clean suit of clothes, from the stockings to the jacket, is required every day, a man cannot travel with a single carpet-bag in his hand.

It was evidently a pleasantry of his majesty, and we enjoyed it as best we could.

"However," said he again, "we must have the shooting to-morrow."

As soon as the king retired, which was not long after, our friends departed; and one of them promised to call at my house and order down my palanquin, in which I intended to pass the night, as I had done some fifty times

before; he was also to send down my clothes for the ensuing day, and my native valet, or *bearer*, as he is called.

The king was assisted into the harem, laughing heartily as he went off at the practical joke he was playing. We laughed too, as courtiers were bound to do.

"You can keep the nautch-girls to amuse you," said he. "Go on dancing; sing away for the sahebs," he continued gaily, as he passed by them.

It was a strange scene;—our friends gone, and the brilliantly-lighted hall—with its massive wax-candles on the table and its chandeliers and wall-shades,—almost empty. The female attendants on the king, together with the servants, had disappeared: the nautch-girls still danced and sang; but, when we thought the king was out of hearing, we dismissed them too; and there we sat, satiated with wine, longing only for retirement and rest. There was no great hardship, unquestionably, in being condemned to sit at a well-stocked table a little later than usual, with all kinds of fruits and the best wines procurable at our bidding—no great hardship unquestionably. Yet it was with an undefined uneasy sensation we glanced round the

deserted apartment, which was about fifty feet long. We hardly spoke above our breath ; as to drinking, we had too keen a remembrance of previous morning headaches to indulge much more.

At length we rose from the table, and wandered about the house. It was all open to us except the sleeping-apartments, before which, as usual, the native female sepoys, with muskets at their shoulders, paced noiselessly. All was silent and deserted-looking; a native servant here and there, with his clothes wrapped round him, head, feet, and all bandaged up as it were, lay on a mat asleep, not to be awoke by ten times as much noise as we made.

It was now about two o'clock, and our servants had not yet arrived ; so taking possession, one of a couch and another of an easy-chair, we resigned ourselves to the musquitoes and to sleep. The large wax-candles burned on the table near ; and the only sound to be heard was the snoring of some lusty sleeper, the monotonous pacing of the sentinels, and the servants in the dining-room extinguishing the lamps.

I had hardly composed myself to sleep, however, when my palanquin was borne into a room

adjoining,—a small empty room, which would not be defiled by our occupying it. My companions were soon similarly provided, our servants making us comfortable enough; and in a few minutes we forgot the king's pleasantry and our position in a sound sleep.

The next day passed as the preceding. A servant told us occasionally that the king had inquired for us,—a hint that we were not to leave. The barber was in attendance to dress his hair as usual about twelve o'clock. We amused ourselves in the palace as best we could, now pacing up and down the verandahs with a cigar, now playing a game of billiards, and anon inspecting some article of oriental *virtù* that ornamented some of the rooms. It was evident the king was determined we should not leave; but not a word was said of the shooting, no preparation whatever was made for departing to the lake where we had been assured the wild-fowl congregated in thousands.

Dinner passed as before, the king again remarking that he could not be left alone in such a dull place, and that the following day we must go off to the lake. We slept as before in our palanquins, sending off our *bearers* to provide clothes for the following day. Sus-

pecting, however, that the king intended remaining some time, either at the palace in which we then were, or at an encampment that had been prepared near the lake, I ordered down at once my bed, and usual travelling companions in the way of boxes and stores. I would be prepared for all contingencies, at all events. A little inquiry amongst the native attendants had elicited the fact that the king was very much pleased with some new addition to his harem, some fascinating little beauty of tender years whom he had first seen on reaching Dil-kushar a day or two previously. It was a new toy, to be played with for a few days and then discarded; just as younger children amuse themselves with a rattle to-day, and with a jack-in-the-box to-morrow.

I was fully prepared therefore for the week's attendance required of us at this out-of-the-way place. At the end of that time we set forward to the lake. The king had made it a personal request, that we should not visit it until we all travelled together. We were surprised and delighted, on first obtaining a sight of the lake, with the extent of the preparations made for our party. The ground sloped upwards from the water's edge on the side

whence we approached, so that we caught no glimpse of it until we had crested the little hill on the side of which we were travelling.

The lake was spread out before us shining in the red lurid light of the setting sun. It might have been two miles long by one in breadth. Thick forest grew on all sides of it, except on that by which we drew near—thick forest down to the very water's edge, in many places overhanging the water gracefully. On the side whence we approached, a grassy bank opened round a little bay, sloping upwards gradually to the summit on which we stood. Round this miniature bay stretched the encampment, the king's tent in the centre, —a highly-decorated marquee, conspicuous from the crimson lines which ornamented it, and the triangular green flags. The tents for the ladies of the king's household and suite—his wives and their attendants, the female sepoys and bearers, the dancing and singing girls, and servants—were situated behind the marquee. The resident was to honour the expedition with his presence, and a handsomely-decorated tent had been prepared for him on the right of the king's. On the other side, at some distance, a square tent was pitched

for us, the European members of the household. These were not all, however; there were tents also for the nawab, or native prime minister, for his son the commander-in-chief, for the general at the head of the police, and other officers, many of them with numerous attendants. Amongst all this little canvas town were elephants picqueted about, horses and camels, howdahs here and palanquins there, together with all the variety of conveyances used by the superior native females.

The king had been determined to surprise us; and he succeeded. He was delighted at the admiration which we expressed; honest admiration it was too, for a more brilliant or a finer scene it would not be easy to imagine. We did not ask him, of course, what was the use of it all. We did not remark that the lake was within easy visiting distance of Lucknow, and that it might easily have been journeyed to in the morning, our sport continued during the day, and we ourselves sleep, or, if need were, dine, each in his own house, in Lucknow the same evening. These were considerations not for us to bring forward. We admired the lake, and the beautiful scenery round it—we admired the encampment and its varied oriental

aspect—and we expressed our admiration. He was content, and we anticipated enjoyment.

We soon found, however, that sporting with a king in company was a different thing from sporting with ordinary unanointed men. He was to have all the sport to himself, and for several days he had it all to himself. A screen was put up on the shore, in front of the little bay I have already mentioned. The object of the screen was to prevent the king from being seen by the wild-fowl when he fired on them. They were enticed in great numbers to the waters of the little bay by parched corn and rice scattered plentifully on its surface. When they had collected in hundreds, if not in thousands, on the surface of the water, the encampment being kept as still as possible, the king was informed all was ready. He came down to the screen noiselessly, an attendant carrying his Joe Manton. A hole had been properly prepared, in which the king inserted the end of Joe's muzzle. The birds swam about and picked up the corn, fighting and screaming and fluttering here and there, intent on their occupation,—not for a moment thinking of Majesty and Manton. Blaze went the gun: the king himself had fired,—a feat for accomplish-

ing which he regarded himself as no little of a sportsman. The shot pattered in like hail amongst the birds, a good deal going harmlessly over them; for his majesty was nothing of a marksman. With loud cries the birds rose forthwith into the air, and disappeared in the forests. The attendants rushed into the water to secure the wounded and the dead. They brought out double as many as the king had injured, and made a little pile of them before the delighted "refuge of the world." Double as many! you exclaim, good reader—double as many as the king had injured! Yes, double as many at least; for, had the king not hit one, they would have brought out a goodly supply, which, of course, they also took in with them. It was the interest of all to keep his majesty in good humour; so the attendants were provided with birds recently brought in from the adjoining district. When they were in the water, standing up to their arm-pits in it, it was easy to untie the birds they had concealed about their persons; and who was to say, when they emerged from the lake, that all these had not been shot by his Majesty and Joe Manton? Who, indeed? Not I, I assure the reader. The thousand rupees

I drew from his majesty's treasury monthly were of too much consequence to me to permit of my hinting such a thing.

This kind of sport continued for three or four days. The resident and his party, however, arrived at the end of that time, and then the king had it no longer all to himself. The resident's friends shot, and we shot; boats were procured, and we went out in them over the lake, enjoying excellent sport. The trained hawks were now brought into requisition, and marvellous it was to see the instinct with which they seconded the efforts of their trainers. The ordinary hawking of the heron we had at a later period of this expedition; but the use now made of the animal was altogether different, and displayed infinitely more sagacity than one would suppose likely to be possessed by such an animal. These were trained especially for the purpose for which they were now employed. A flight of birds—thousands of birds—were enticed upon the water as before, by scattering corn over it. The hawks were then let fly, four or five of them. We made our appearance openly upon the bank, guns in hand, and the living swarm of birds rose at once into the air. The hawks circled above them, however,

in a rapid revolving flight, and they dared not ascend high. Thus was our prey retained fluttering in mid-air, until hundreds had paid the penalty with their lives—the penalty of fear and sagacity, fear on their part, sagacity on that of the hawk. Only picture in your mind's eye the circling hawks above, gyrating monotonously, the fluttering captives in mid-air, darting now here, now there, to escape, and still, coward-like, huddling together, with the motley group of sportsmen on the bank,—and you have the whole scene before you at once.

Nothing could be more delightful than the bustling activity which pervaded our camp, as every day brought with it some new amusement; but unfortunately the king was by no means in the same excellent humour as before: his majesty was annoyed to find himself a secondary sort of personage;—as a sportsman, it may be easily imagined that the rank he took was not of the highest.

To us of the household, obliged to be constantly in attendance on the king, his ill-humour was a source of considerable annoyance; and he was soon induced to think of proceeding further into the country in pursuit of larger game. Yet it was not without regret that we

left the picturesque lake and the well-appointed encampment on its banks. The boat-excursions over the water were delightful. It was a pleasant thing to be rowing away amid the wooded banks and by the sides of the overhanging foliage, now catching a glimpse, now losing it again, of the varied scene upon the rising ground, which was covered with the tents, the beasts of burden, the body-guards, and the motley people; it was a pleasant thing to come suddenly upon some startled heron, as we opened up a little creek, to hear the bird scream out its disapprobation of our intrusion, flap its large wings energetically in the endeavour to rise, and then to see it falling helpless, brought down by a well-directed bullet; it was a pleasant thing to see the groups of smaller wild-fowl winging their flight away long ere we came near them—some bigger and bolder fellow remaining to the last intent upon his fishing, remaining too often only to share the fate he intended for his tiny prey, by becoming the prey of a larger animal in his turn.

Nothing more beautiful than the sun setting amid such a scene can be conceived. Whilst the red sky was reflected brilliantly

in the waters beneath, and the red sunbeams tinged the foliage of the trees with a brilliant border, devout Mussulmans might be seen on the open bank in the neighbourhood of the encampment engaged in the *muggreeb* or evening prayer, their figures distinctly seen in the waters beneath, as they kissed the ground, and bent the body, and knelt upon their little mats. Over them too the lurid beams of the sun exerted a gilding influence; and whether dressed in the gaudy uniform of the body-guard, or in the more sober sepoy dress, or in the scanty native costume, still all was hallowed and illuminated, and rendered picturesque by the red sun-light. The cries of the birds and of the monkeys, as they composed themselves in the forest, or called to each other with chirps or screams, harmonised well with the scene. The elephants stood upon the banks in silence, the camels lay in silence chewing the cud, with their bending necks moving gracefully as they brought up the balls of food into their mouths; the horses too ate their evening meal in silence, picqueted about here and there, whilst some tiny bird and the still tinier insects filled the whole air with their noisy declamation. It is so in human life; it is not

the most useful part of mankind that makes the most noise in the world, but generally speaking that portion which is fondest of noisy talk, and can declaim most loudly.

It was no difficult matter to induce the king to proceed farther into the interior of the country. He had been so well satisfied with his own exploits in the way of wild-fowl shooting before the arrival of the resident and his party, that he determined upon having other and more dangerous sport.

"We shall have deer-shooting, pig-sticking, and tiger-hunting," said he, in a moment of enthusiasm, "before we return to Lucknow."

The encampment was broken up, and we journeyed northwards in order to gain a part of the country where the wild boar and hog were to be met with. Considering the extent of the attendance upon the king, it may be readily conceived that our progress was far indeed from being a rapid one. The trained stags, used as decoys, were brought with us; the hawks, for we were to have hawking too; the cheetahs, a species of leopard trained to hunt the deer,—these came in waggons, with their keepers and attendants. There was the king's harem, of course, containing his six

wives, his numerous concubines, and the dancing and singing girls, their servants and their attendant female sepoys, forming a little army of covered conveyances in themselves; there was the body-guard, in its flaunting livery of blue and silver; there were elephants bearing tents and baggage; camels, some for riding, used chiefly by messengers, and some employed as beasts of burden; together with horses in abundance. When to all this is added *our* train, consisting of elephants, horses, and palanquins, it may be easily conceived that our advance was more like the march of an Indian army than the progress of a simple hunting-party.

The villagers living along the route by which we journeyed were thrown into consternation by our appearance. The king and his retinue had never made their way into this part of the country before; and the march of an Eastern sovereign through his dominions is a sad thing for the people. The king's servants regard themselves as a privileged race. They have a right, they think, to the best of every thing, and to as much of it as they please; so that the plundering and maltreating of the unfortunate inhabitants went

on upon all sides. Besides this, was any difficulty to be surmounted, any impassable road to be made practicable, or a new road to be made where road there never had been before, the villagers far and near were turned out to do it, —men and women and children all turned out to work as long as the nawab liked, their only pay the abuse and punishment they received if the work were not done as speedily as the nawab wished. People in England may possibly think such a state of things impossible; people in India who have visited the territories of any native prince must be aware that it is literally true.

At length we came to another lake, forty or fifty miles from that which we had left in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. It was more than twice the extent of the former one, and was altogether wilder in aspect. The snowy range of the Himalayas had gradually been becoming more and more distinct as we journeyed northwards; the country, too, was generally more hilly, and larger patches of jungle and forest alternated with the cultivated land. For several miles there had been no road but that hastily constructed by the nawab's orders in time for the passage of our vast and hetero-

geneous company. Right over rice-fields, and through forests, and across valuable meadows of Indian corn, was the road constructed; the destruction of property a secondary consideration, the comfort of the king and his retinue being of primary importance.

The encampment was formed at some distance from the lake, much in the same order and with the same arrangement as before. The resident, however, was not with us—his tents and retinue were wanting. The king went out shooting as before; but the marshy character of the banks rendered it by no means so pleasant for him as it was at the other lake. Herons abounded in the neighbourhood, and the hawks were brought forward. For several days we enjoyed keenly this delightful sport. None of us, except the king, had seen hawking before in its perfection. The flight of the bird when released; his swooping round and round in the air, slowly at first, then more rapidly; the sight gained of the rising heron, and the hawk's instant flight upwards to overtop the fugitive; the anxious watching for the result, as the pursuer gradually gained the desired position right above his prey; the instant dart downwards,

like a lightning-flash, whilst beak and claws were buried simultaneously in the heron's back; and then the twirling tumble of both birds as they fell, turning round and round rapidly in their fall;—all this was worth gazing at,—all this was a scene not to be easily forgotten when once witnessed. But this was not all. No sooner was the blow struck than we dashed off on horseback to witness the fall. Quiet elderly gentlemen, much given to port and portliness, might then be seen scampering over the country in an eminently reckless way—over a difficult wild country too, as if fleeing from destruction behind, instead of being impelled simply by curiosity forwards. Every one was anxious to be in at the death—to witness the hawk extricated from his prey, both birds perhaps bruised and wounded with the fall. It was a pleasant thing to see the care with which the attendants inspected the feathery warrior, to see what injury he had received; it was interesting, too, to see the eagerness with which, in spite of any amount of injury, the hawk seized his dainty morsel of the prey. The king was a good horseman, and enjoyed the sport as much as any.

In the king's large tent we enjoyed our

dinners as usual after these sports daily, every thing being at the table exactly as in Lucknow; there was no want of any thing but moderation in the use of wine to render these dinners comfortable enough. The well-cooked viands, the spacious dining-table, the large wax-candles, the gaudy china and valuable plate, the dancing-girls and the female attendants, with their fans of the peacock's tail, —all were here exactly as though we had been in the palace in Lucknow, instead of being on the shores of a wild lake, with forest and jungle around us, fifty miles away from it.

The wild-boar and the hog were not to be found in the neighbourhood however, nor the tiger; so that for the "pig-sticking" and the tiger-hunting we were to advance, after a time, farther north. Deer, however, abounded in the forest; and it was determined that we should have three varieties of deer-stalking. In the first place, the trained stags were to be employed; secondly, the cheetahs; and thirdly, we were to have a regular hunt on horseback and on foot. Such was the programme of the amusements for the ensuing week. The king began to get tired of the daily hawking and wild-fowl shooting.

I have never heard of trained stags being so employed elsewhere as I saw them employed in Oude; I shall therefore be a little more minute in my description of this sport. Hawking and wild-fowl shooting are pretty much the same all the world over; but the decoy-stags were a novelty to me.

In our rides in the neighbourhood of the lake near which we were encamped, we lighted upon a fine open country adjoining a forest, which would answer admirably for the purpose. The adjoining wood was full of the smaller game of Oude, or, if not smaller, at all events the more harmless, amongst which the wild deer must be classed as one. Skilful beaters were sent off into the forest to drive the deer, as if unintentionally, that is without violence or making much noise, towards the point of the forest adjoining the open space I have just mentioned. Here, protected by its watching guardians, the most warlike and powerful of its males, the herd was congregated together in apparent safety.

We had about a dozen trained stags, all males, with us. These, well acquainted with the object for which they were sent forwards, advanced at a gentle trot over the open ground

towards the skirt of the wood. They were observed at once by the watchers of the herd, and the boldest of the wild animals advanced to meet them. Whether the intention was to welcome them peacefully, or to do battle for their pasturage, I cannot tell; but in a few minutes the two parties were engaged in a furious contest. Head to head, antlers to antlers, the tame deer and the wild fought with great fury. Each of the tame animals, every one of them large and formidable, was closely engaged in contest with a wild adversary, standing chiefly on the defensive, not in any feigned battle or mimicry of war, but in a hard-fought combat. We now made our appearance in the open ground on horseback, advancing towards the scene of conflict. The deer on the skirts of the wood, seeing us, took to flight; but those actually engaged maintained their ground and continued the contest.

In the meantime a party of native huntsmen, sent for the purpose, gradually drew near to the wild stags, getting in between them and the forest. What their object was, we were not at the time aware; in truth, it was not one that we could have approved or encouraged. They made their way into the rear of the wild

stags, which were still combating too fiercely to mind them; they approached the animals, and with a skilful cut of their long knives the poor warriors fell hamstrung. We felt pity for the noble animals, as we saw them fall helplessly on the ground, unable longer to continue the contest, and pushed down, of course, by the decoy-stags. Once down, they were unable to rise again.

The tame ones were called off in a moment; not one of them pursued his victory. Their work was done; they obeyed the call of their keepers almost at once, and were led off like hounds, some of them bearing evidence in their gored chests that the contest in which they had been engaged was no sham, but a reality. As we rode up, we saw them led off triumphantly, capering over the ground, as if proud of their exploits, tossing their fine-spreading antlers about joyously, and sometimes looking as if they would enjoy a little more fighting—this time with each other. The contrast presented by the overthrown wild animals was a pitiable one. There was no boisterous energy about them, no jumping and tossing of the head, no prancing or curvetting. All the energy of the noble beasts

was concentrated in their eyes. As they lay, some upon their sides, some upon their bellies, they watched us with their large black eyes intently. Incapable of further action, the faint glimmering of soul which they possessed shone fully in their fixed eyeballs. It was as if reproaching us that they looked thus full into our faces, as we rode from one to the other—conquered warriors, and hardly conquered by fair means; nay, certainly not conquered by fair means—it was simple butchery, that ham-stringing. When a whole field—men and horses and dogs—turns out in England to course after an unfortunate hare, one feels pity for the animal. The disproportion between the means and the end strikes every one at once. Yet I never felt so much pity for the hare under such circumstances—not even when I saw it torn to pieces by badly-trained dogs—as I felt for the mute, large-eyed, noble stags, as they lay there, looking reproachfully at us. The fact was, I was too soft-hearted for an Oude sportsman. The signal was given by the king, and the throats of the poor animals were cut. It was the only thing that could be done with them. To have preserved their lives, or carried them off

in that helpless state, would have been wanton cruelty.

This was the only use I saw made of the decoy-stags; but I was informed they are also similarly used when the intention is, not to destroy their adversaries, but to take them alive and uninjured. Two men then advance towards each of the wild animals with a strong net,—they advance from behind as usual,—the net is skilfully thrown over the head of the stag, and he is upset by a sudden jerk. Should he not be upset, but turn upon his assailants, the lives of the men are in danger—in imminent danger. Another difficulty in the matter is, to avoid entangling the antlers of the tame stag in the net as well. As long as the two animals are locked together, head to head, antler in antler, of course the net cannot be thrown successfully. It is only when both animals have retired a little to make another rush forwards, that the desired opportunity is afforded.

The trained leopard, called the cheetah, was also brought up during our stay at this encampment to hunt the deer. Cheetahs are too commonly seen in the zoological collections in Europe now-a-days, to render a description of the animal necessary. They differ from the

common leopard chiefly in the form of the head, which is smaller and uglier, and in the spots on the skin, which are lighter and less varied. The cheetah is a taller and more powerful beast than the ordinary leopard. I have heard of their making their way, when very much in want of food, into the villages of Ceylon, and carrying off old men and women, or children. It is true, one naturally feels a little doubtful about Ceylonese accounts of wild animals, after the wonderful stories recorded by sportsmen who have been much in that favoured island;* but looking only at the size and strength of the animal, I see no reason to doubt the fact, although in northern India such things do not occur. The tigers, perhaps, keep the smaller fry in order there, and reserve all the human hunting to themselves.

The conducting of the cheetah from his cage to the chase is by no means an easy matter. The keeper leads him along as he would a large dog, with a chain; and for a time, as they scamper over the country, the cheetah goes willingly enough; but if any

* See *Forest Life in Ceylon; The Rifle and the Hound in Ceylon; The Tent and the Bungalow; Tropical Sketches*, &c.

thing arrests his attention, some noise from the forest, some scented trail upon the ground, he moves more slowly, throws his head aloft, and peers savagely round. A few more minutes, perhaps, and he would be unmanageable. The keeper, however, is prepared for the emergency. He holds in his left hand a cocoa-nut shell, sprinkled on the inside with salt; and, by means of a handle affixed to the shell, he puts it at once over the nose of the cheetah. The animal licks the salt, loses the scent, forgets the object which arrested his attention, and is led quietly along again. As often as symptoms of excitement are exhibited, so often is the cocoa-nut shell applied to the nose; and after each application the cheetah is docile and manageable.

The race which takes place when the cheetah and his keeper have stolen unobserved within a moderate distance of the prey, is one of the most interesting and exciting kind. The deer is flying for his life; and bounds straight forward over every thing that would impede his progress, jumping, running, wading, swimming by turns, with frantic energy. On the other hand, the cheetah's blood is up. He is no laggard. The deer is his natural prey. How he leaps high over all obstacles;

how he bounds, cat-like, over the bushes, and even takes to the water rather than lose the fugitive, are things, once seen, to be remembered for many years. Nor is the part of the horseman an easy one. With all the care that had been taken to enable his majesty to get an excellent view of the hunt; with all the care that had been taken to select a suitable part of the country, and to remove obstacles,—it was still by no means an easy task to keep up. We were well mounted on horses that entered keenly into the spirit of the chase, and kept their eyes, as we kept ours, fixed now upon the flying deer, now upon the pursuing cheetah; and yet it was a difficult task to keep the chase in sight, particularly over the stubbly grass and marshy ground. There was evidently no royal road to the enjoyment of hunting however, and his majesty and his suite were fain to be content. Helter-skelter we dashed along, keeping well together—for the king would never have forgiven us had we outridden him—now by the side of an ugly *nullah*, or bed of a stream, at this season dry; now over the long wiry grass, that grew in tufts, affording most insecure footing to the horses as they dashed forwards,—the cheetah seemed to skim over it without requiring foot-

ing at all; at another time we found ourselves in an open space covered with a sort of scrubby brushwood, not more than two or three feet high; the horses dashed on, however, regardless of the want of road, now finding an opening to the right, now to the left, until we left the brushwood behind.

At length the deer was fairly run down. The forest was near; and if that were once attained, we felt convinced that the chase was over as far as we were concerned; for no horse could penetrate through the thick under-growth of a tropical forest. The deer never gained it, however. Worn out with the long pursuit, and paralysed with fear at the indefatigable pursuit of its bloodthirsty foe, the poor animal leaped head-foremost into a little thicket, fancying apparently it was the beginning of the forest. Its branching horns were caught for a moment in the creepers; and just as it had extricated them, and was bounding forwards again, the cheetah was upon it.

His majesty was well satisfied, for he was in at the death; and having heard from us of the fox's brush, and the anxiety to secure it amongst sportsmen, had the tail of the deer fixed triumphantly in his hunting-cap.

CHAPTER IV.

TIT FOR TAT.

Geological problem—Royal inconvenience—Cruelty in a Hindu zenanah—Thunder-storm—Disturbance in the camp—Plunder—Keeping guard—The thief—Confusion—The barber—A friend in need—Return to Lucknow—Summary justice.

We were at this period encamped to the north of a village called Misrik,—a few miles only to the north of it,—between the Goomty and one of its tributaries, the Kutheny. One of the expeditions that took us farthest from the encampment,—whether an extraordinary run of the cheetah, or a journey in search of a herd of deer, I do not remember which,—brought us upon the borders of a small sheet of water, the shores of which were covered with a fine impalpable white sand, resembling, in its acrid taste and smarting pungency, as well as in its appearance, finely-powdered saltpetre.

This deposit has been the subject of much

interesting speculation amongst Indian geologists, and of not a little controversy. I do not pretend to be a scientific man, and therefore I feel bound to believe the evidence of my senses. Those, therefore, who assure me that this is nothing but fine sand, similar to what is found sometimes upon the sea-shore, only a little whiter in colour, ask me to believe what I have a very vivid recollection of my senses having refused to credit at the time. The water of the jheel or little lake was brackish, as might have been expected; and as we rode over the white powder, at first rapidly, but after a little more leisurely, clouds of the dust were raised into the air, and diffused themselves round and about us as if they were no heavier than the atmosphere. There was fortunately no wind blowing at the time; had there been, we should probably have been blinded. As it was, our eyes and nostrils and mouths and ears were filled with the bitter smarting powder, each particle apparently, although too minute for vision, being large enough and acrid enough to leave a stinging sensation behind it when it had made its way into the nostrils. Our horses felt the effect of the saltpetre shower as much as we did, and snorted and sneezed vehemently

to get rid of its effects, wanting to turn at every step to the water, which was unfit for them to drink.

This uncomfortable ride was the beginning of the end of our memorable hunting expedition. The powdered saltpetre—as I must persist in calling it until I am supplied with a better name—insinuated itself with as little ceremony into the royal nostrils and eyes as into our more plebeian organs; and his majesty swore at it in excellent Hindustani and clipped English with an energy that one would hardly believe him capable of. It was amusing to hear one scientific member of our party assuring us that a more interesting geological phenomenon it would be impossible to discover any where; that we were lucky in meeting thus accidentally with a deposit which the *savans* of Europe would travel far to inspect. We sneezed, and coughed, and rubbed our eyes, and listened to him. The greater number of us had indeed shut our eyes as soon as the smarting pain had been first felt; but still the dust insinuated itself between the closed eyelids in an eminently pertinacious sort of way, and we began to fear at length for the eyesight of our horses.

"What could be easier than to have retraced your steps when the inconvenience was first discovered?" asks some one wise in his generation. From what I have already said, no one fancies for a moment, I am sure, that we continued to ride over this powdered saltpetre from any affection for it, from any devotion to science, or any earnest desire to make ourselves martyrs in its pursuit: we were as anxious to escape from this sea of impalpable dust as a London alderman is to get rid of annoyance after dinner, and compose himself to a soothing nap. But then, how was it to be done? We did not come upon this "interesting deposit" all at once. No one could say where it began, and where it ended. We had made our way into its midst gradually, crossing a little patch here, and then a little patch there, finding it here mixed with earth, and there neutralised by a heavy loamy soil that would not let it rise. By the time we had reached the position in which our horses' hoofs turned it up in clouds all around and about us, we were in its midst, and it appeared shorter to go through to the opposite side than to turn and retrace our steps.

That evening, on regaining our tents, we

prepared as usual for the royal dinner-party. His majesty had not yet recovered from the annoyance he felt; the powdered saltpetre still irritated his eyes and nostrils; he was uneasy, vexed, out of temper. We received scant courtesy from him that evening; nor could the buffoonery of the barber, or the most spirited sallies of the court-jesters, or the dancing of the nautch-girls, restore the king to equanimity. He was annoyed at having been allowed to get into so unpleasant a position. He ought to have been informed of the inconvenience beforehand. Even the suggestion of our scientific friend, that the deposit might turn out to be a valuable mine—a suggestion which arrested his attention for a moment, but was totally forgotten afterwards—did not suffice to remove his irritation. The king retired into the female apartments at an unusually early hour, and we returned to our tents. Heaven help the poor woman who has the misfortune at such a moment to displease or disgust an irritated despot! an accidental sneeze, a louder cough than usual, nay even an ungraceful movement, may bring down punishment terrible to think of; torture, perhaps, at the bare mention of which the English wife or

mother or daughter would shudder. Such things take place but too often in the Hindu zenanahs of India. Magistrates know that such things often take place; but they are helpless to punish or prevent. The zenanah and the harem are sacred; and the female slave that revealed their more horrid mysteries would suffer a lingering and excruciating death at the hands of the very women whom her revelations might be intended to protect. The chief, and the wealthy man, who is disposed to be cruel, can act despotically, tyrannically enough; but the king, with unquestioned power of life and death in his hands, if once infuriated or enraged, can torture and kill without question. "My wife is about being confined," said a savage Hindu rajah to his European friend, a solicitor; "my wife is about being confined; and if she does not make me the father of a *son*, I will whip her to death with my hunting-whip." The child was born,—it was a daughter,—and the woman's body was burnt two days after. How she had died, no one out of the zenanah certainly knew. The fact of the threat only transpired long afterwards, when it was the interest of the solicitor to whom the remark had been made to prove the rajah mad in his later days, in order to set aside a will.

Be not alarmed, however, good reader. I have no intention of inflicting upon you any tale of zenanah cruelty at present; I was but speculating, and illustrating my speculations with a fact.

Up to this period of our hunting expedition the weather had been remarkably fine. We were awoke, however, just after we had composed ourselves to sleep that evening, by a violent thunder-storm and a deluge of rain, the precursors of a changing monsoon. The lightnings flashed with a vivid intensity and a rapidity such as are seldom seen out of the tropics. As we lay in our large square tent, five of us, the thunder appeared to roll exactly over our heads, and not to be further distant than the top of the tent-poles; whilst the lightning-flashes lit up the scene with their dancing zig-zag flights through the heavens and their sheet-like glare. Every two or three moments we could see, for an instant, as distinctly as possible, each object in the tent, together with the black outlines of the clouds outside, through our double canvas covering; for an instant only; and then all was gloom again, deep, dark, impenetrable gloom.

It was just about midnight. Between the intervals of the thunder the wind whistled

and howled without like a demon. Our tent heaved up and down, now bulging uneasily out here, and then rapidly collapsing again, the tent-poles quivering unsteadily as the canvas flapped-to. We felt convinced that the tent would come down; and, all being awake, expressed our fears to that effect to each other. But we were mistaken. The servants busied themselves putting in a pin here, and bracing up a rope there, and all remained secure. It was evident, however, that there was great excitement in the camp. In the intervals of the thunder we could hear, besides the neighing of horses, and the crying of camels, and the blowing of elephants, the shouts of men as they called to each other.

"Some of the animals have got loose," said we to each other, when the rolling of the thunder and the howling of the wind would permit us to be heard.

At length the storm abated; and still the commotion in the camp continued, nay, became even louder and more loud.

"Several of the animals got loose," said we to each other. "It is to be hoped the elephants will not get amongst the tent-ropes, or down the tents will come."

With this benevolent wish, and an order to the servants to see that the loose animals did not disturb us, or approach our tent, we composed ourselves to sleep again.

It was past midnight. We were relapsing fast into unconsciousness; for our tent was an excellent one, and the torrents of rain had incommoded us but little. I was in an easy dozing condition, half-awake, half-asleep, conscious and unconscious, enjoying the sense of security and comfort which my camp-couch afforded, when I contrasted the interior with the probable condition of the exterior of the tent. Still the noise of animals and the cries of men grew ever louder, and it was impossible to sleep.

"Go out, Buxoo," said I to my valet, "and see what all the noise is about."

Buxoo departed. Before he returned another servant was called by some one at the door of the tent, and we heard the announcement of "a messenger from 'the support of the world,'" the oriental paraphrase for a king's servant.

The message was for the captain of the guard, one of our party; an order to present himself before the king with all convenient speed. This order roused us from our half-

dreamy condition. Something of importance was evidently on foot to cause the worthy captain to be called up at such an hour. The messenger knew nothing, except that there was great commotion in the king's quarters, and that one of the royal tents had been blown down. This in itself was food enough for thought. The nawab had the charge of the encampment; could it be that the king was so enraged, that he determined to put the nawab under arrest, or worse, have him executed there and then? Could it be that some frightful event had taken place in the zenanah, and a tumult had been the consequence? Could it be—but there was no use in speculating.

My servant returned shortly after the captain's departure with information that there was a general movement in the king's quarters; but either no one knew or no one would tell him why. He had even gone so far as to ask a jemadar, or native officer, what it was, and got struck in consequence.

This did not tend much to allay our curiosity. The rain was still falling, however, in floods, and none of us felt disposed to go out and seek information for ourselves. At length the captain returned again.

"Look out for your safety, gentlemen, and take care of your property—we are off."

"Off!—where?—who?" we asked in a breath.

"The king starts for Lucknow in half-an-hour—we must attend him of course—the whole force—his wives travel with him. He seems terribly annoyed, and very anxious to return to the capital immediately. Look out for your property, I say, or the villagers will confiscate it." The captain ran on in this way, as he packed up and prepared, now ordering a servant, now giving one of his orderlies some package to take care of.

"Do you seriously think our property is in danger, captain?" I asked.

"Not if you defend it with spirit," was his cool reply; "but of course the poor villagers, who have been plundered and maltreated by the king's servants, will rush in upon the encampment when they know the king and the guard are gone—that always happens."

It was impossible for us to travel with the king, we had not the requisite number of servants. Besides, it was the king's order that we should return with the nawab. Travelling fifty miles in a remote part of Oude is a very

different thing from going over the same space of ground on a well-kept road in Europe. We had an elephant each, and one horse or more; but covered vehicles, palanquins, were necessary for travelling in the day-time, and palanquins required relays of men all along the way to convey them. Besides, whatever baggage we did not take with us would certainly be lost; if not plundered by the villagers, it would never escape the nawab's servants.

There was nothing for it, therefore, but quietly to await the morning, in order to see what force of men the nawab could allow us, and what was the best arrangement that could be made under the circumstances.

We heard the snorting of the horses, and the monotonous song of the labourers who carried the palanquins, and the heavy tramp of the elephants gradually dying away in the distance, as the king's party hurried off. There was no stopping, no delay. What his majesty wanted done, he must have that done at once.

The rain still pattered away upon the outside of our tent; it was a bleak, dark, miserable night. Our lamp stood on a little table in the centre of our tent, faintly illuminating the interior through the hazy vapour-laden

air. We were stretched, four of us, upon our camp-beds, two at one side of the tent, and two at the other. Our palanquins stood at the doors—mine was inside, just across the door. We were not unmindful of the captain's warning; and it had been decided that we should relieve each other in sitting up, one after the other, an hour at a time, until morning came. A pair of loaded pistols and a sword were placed upon the table; and one of our little party, formerly an officer of dragoons in the Austrian service, and still bearing a warlike aspect from his huge moustaches, took his place first at the table, cigar in mouth. Numerous servants were scattered about on the floor of the tent; but they were not to be depended on; besides, they had a wholesome fear of the villagers, whom the day before they would have browbeaten like the fiercest of braggadocios.

Our military guard sat in such a position that he could easily inspect both doors; and, with a dim recollection of having seen him stretching out his legs against the table, tilting back his chair, thrusting both his hands into the waistband of his *pyjamas* or sleeping drawers, and puffing vehemently at a superla-

tive manilla,—one of the king's own you may be certain,—I fell off into a half-unconscious doze.

My couch was the nearest to the door on the left—our guardian dragoon was sitting with his back to it—and my native valet was snoring vigorously upon the ground, wrapped up like a bundle of dirty clothes, neither head nor feet visible, by the side of my couch. I fell off, I say, into a half-unconscious doze; but fortunately retained sufficient consciousness to perceive a stealthy crawling sound in my immediate neighbourhood. I opened my eyes without otherwise moving,—awake, wide awake, at once; and as I became so, I saw a dark brown arm rising as if from the earth, and seizing a bundle of clothes that rested upon a tin box in the corner near me. I had too strong a conviction that every particle of clean linen I possessed in the tent, and indeed nearly all the linen I had brought with me from Lucknow, was in that bundle, not to jump up at once and make a grasp at the long brown arm. It was gone, however, and with it the bundle, before I could seize it. Our military guard, hearing my exclamation, seized one of the pistols, and pointed it full at me as I sat on my knees, for an instant, watching the space between my

couch and the doors; for I felt persuaded the robber had not yet had time to escape. It was all the work of a moment, of course. Our watch advanced pistol in hand—I leaped out of bed and seized a sword. The robber at the same instant glided like a snake from under my couch, and made a dart for the nearest door, that probably by which he had entered.

By this time all were awake, and sat up, making anxious inquiries and uttering alarmed exclamations. I have said that my palanquin was placed across one of the entrances to the tent; the doors of it were open, and, as the robber darted forwards along the ground, he saw that his only hope of safety was a vigorous jump through the palanquin. He attempted this, and executed it as a monkey would have done. As our military watch advanced, pistol in hand, he saw the dark form of the robber bolting through the conveyance, and he fired. I too caught a glimpse of the thief as I turned, after seizing a sword; but only a glimpse,—just saw him gliding through. Fortunately one of the servants had very unceremoniously been occupying my palanquin, and started just as the thief leaped over him—

started, and rolled out of the conveyance, and through the canvas door of the tent, out upon the wet ground outside, fancying the pistol had been fired at him for his impudence. He and the robber rolled together in the mud, each afraid of the other, each fancying he was attacked. The robber escaped, however, very soon, leaving the servant half-smothered in mud, and leaving behind him, too, my bundle of clean linen—clean no longer—soaking in a puddle hard by.

To those who have never travelled in a tropical country, it may appear that this was a slight misfortune. Had they experienced the comfort of a change of linen, and the discomfort of a want of it, when travelling with the thermometer between eighty-five and ninety, shut in by forest and jungle from a breath of air, themselves steaming, the ground steaming, the vegetation steaming, and the elephant or horse, or human beasts of burden, steaming too, they would think differently. My valet was the first to find the lost bundle: I was thankful that it was found; but its condition turned my thankfulness into indignation. A yellowish-browny mud, exceedingly soft and sloppy and insinuating, had made its way into

every article of clothing it contained; and vehemently did I accuse the moustachoed watch of being the cause of my calamity, as I turned over piece after piece of foul linen. He laughed, and assured me that the fellow had not got off free, for he had lodged a ball in him. If this were true, he must have fired two from the same barrel; for I found a pistol-bullet sunk deeply into the frame of my palanquin in the morning. I did not fail to point it out to him; and he had the audacity to tell me, as he stroked his horse-hair-like moustache, that he had observed that mark there several days before, and that he rather thought the bullet had been lodged there one night when I was asleep inside; all which, of course, was simply nonsense.

There was no more going to sleep that night. The villagers had soon discovered that the king was gone with the body-guard, and they now broke into the encampment. Through the long dark hours we heard the cries of men and the shrieks of women resounding from the neighbourhood of the king's tents. The poorer portions of the female attendants had been unable to accompany the harem; and they were now exposed to every wrong and injury

at the hands of the outraged villagers. Tents were broken into and pillaged; ornaments were torn from the hands and feet of the poor women; boxes were broken open, and clothes seized belonging to the first ladies of the court. As for us, self-preservation is the primary law of nature. It was the nawab's duty, not ours, to protect the camp. We expected every moment an attack upon our own tent, and so we sat up prepared, one with his pistols, another with his gun, and a third with his sword, all looking fierce and resolute. We were reconnoitred doubtless by the plunderers, and they felt no desire to come to close quarters with us. But why not go out and try and save the women from outrage? asks some indignant reader, with more enthusiasm than common sense. I will answer the question. The women left behind were, for the most part, discarded concubines, dancing-girls disgraced, or poor attendants. Had we entered their tents, calumny would soon have been rife in Lucknow; and some of these very ladies would have been the first to charge us with violating their privacy. A charge of having made our way into the harem would bring down at once upon us the anger of the king

and of the resident; and then, farewell, a long farewell, to all our hopes of fortune, to the little or the much we had accumulated. In the second place, our own tent, left without a guard, would soon have been pillaged; and however chivalrous men may be, they do not usually take care of other people's property before their own. Fewer than four of us could not have ventured forth to the succour of the distressed damsels; many of whom, by the by, would not have thanked us for the interference, if every thing we heard was true; and had we all gone, who was to prevent our clothes and our saddles, our couches and our travelling paraphernalia, nay, our very horses and palanquins, from being carried off?

Our horses were picqueted round the tent, and could not be carried off without carrying the native grooms with them; for, on the first alarm, the ropes by which they were attached to the stakes driven into the ground were firmly tied round the arms of the grooms within.

Amid such sights and sounds as I have described we sat in our tent, enjoying our cigars, during the long hours of darkness. In the morning, when we sallied forth to see

the results of the tumult of the preceding night, a stranger or a more variegated scene it would not be easy to discover any where, or even to picture to the imagination. One of the royal tents had been blown down; and so intent was the king upon instant departure, that he would not allow any attempt to be made to raise it again. Every man was to assist in getting ready what was needful for the rapid march back to Lucknow—more resembling a flight than a march,—and no one thought of the fallen tent; no one except the villagers, *they* had not forgotten it. Notwithstanding all that the guards of the nawab could do, it had been ransacked and plundered. Even the very coat and pantaloons the king had taken off the previous evening were stolen. The whole ground around the encampment was littered, when we visited it, with portions of female attire that had been dropped in the hot haste of the plunderers as they made away with their booty. Articles, many of them of considerable value, lay strewn about in hopeless confusion—articles of furniture, cooking-apparatus, clothing, trappings for elephants and camels; the whole was, in fact, a complete litter of every kind of oriental

requirement for the house, the person, and the road. Not *all* oriental, either. To our surprise, we noticed portions of female attire here and there never used by the Eastern ladies; articles with which the shop-windows in London make the modest man painfully familiar. We were perfectly aware that no European in the king's service—cook, barber, coachman, or of the household—had his wife with him during the march; and our conclusion was, therefore, that these articles belonged to some ladies of the harem, of whom we had heard and knew nothing.

That there had been hard fighting between the guarding attendants of the nawab and the villagers, was apparent enough; for two men lay hacked and hewn almost to pieces upon the ground, both evidently strangers to the encampment; and we heard that several of the nawab's servants had been severely wounded.

We returned to our tent, to partake of a hasty breakfast preparatory to departure. On reaching our quarters, we found every thing in confusion—an uproar would be the proper name for the scene that was apparent within our tent. It was some time before we suc-

ceeded in making ourselves heard, and getting intelligible answers to the questions we asked, so fierce was the dispute, and loud and violent the abuse. It was evident at a glance that some servants of the nawab were in violent altercation with ours, about what or wherefore we could not understand. Sticks were even raised in an eminently threatening way upon both sides; and had our return been delayed, another fight would have taken place in our very tent.

"The good-for-nothings will not obey the orders of his excellency the nawab, O sahebs," shouted the chief of the intruders.

"The vile sons of vile mothers want us to leave my lords' tent, and go and help them somewhere else," screamed our servants in chorus.

Both parties spoke, Hindu fashion, at the utmost pitch of their voices. When men quarrel in India, they invariably try and frighten each other with loud talking.

We were evidently interested in the matter in dispute. A little questioning soon brought forth the information, that the nawab had sent an order to the sahebs' servants to assist in the general work of the encampment before

departing; and the messengers wanted to press into their service all our bearers and grooms, all not actually engaged in packing or preparing breakfast. Had we submitted to this injustice, as we considered it, there was no telling when we should be able to depart; and, with a large stock of muddy linen, it was my interest to get back to Lucknow as soon as possible. I was by no means the only one, however, who felt the necessity of immediate departure. The king's company would leave the country through which we had to travel bare enough of labourers to assist in carrying our palanquins; if the nawab's also left before us, there was no telling when we should reach Lucknow, or whether we should reach it at all; for the European members of the king's household were not popular in Oude.

We reasoned calmly and quietly, representing the anxiety of the king for our presence, and his commands to follow him with all convenient speed. We were answered, that the nawab would take upon his own head the blame of our delay. We urged again, that it was our duty to attend his majesty forthwith; and that if we gave up our servants without a struggle, we should be wanting in respect to

"the refuge of the world." We were answered, that in the king's absence the nawab was the ruler, and that the command was his. We urged again, that we had several brace of pistols, six fowling-pieces, two rifles, and a large variety of swords, and that we were able to defend ourselves and our servants. The quiet reply was, that the nawab had three servants for our one, a much larger collection of arms, and if forced to use violence, would leave us no servants at all.

The quiet firmness of the officer sent with the party convinced us that the nawab was determined in the matter. Mingling his words with polite flattery and oriental exaggeration of our bravery and greatness, he yet persisted incessantly, never yielding so much as an inch.

We were at our wits' end. It was a very unpleasant position in which to be placed; and to fight the nawab we did not intend. At length, as we still argued uselessly, the barber was thought of. Not a native attendant upon the court but had a hearty and unfeigned fear of the barber; his influence was known to be preponderant. An old and unsavoury proverb says, that if we think of a certain person he will appear. The barber was thought of

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at this moment, and the barber appeared. He was anxious to be off, too, immediately; fortunately it was his interest, therefore, to travel with us, and to get to Lucknow as soon as possible. The circumstances were explained to him, and the little man seemed to grow big with indignation.

"You are all a pack of scoundrels together," he exclaimed, addressing the officer, "every one of you, nawab and all." This was in English, and was intended for the officer alone. "Go and tell his excellency," he continued in his halting Hindustani, "that the 'refuge of the world' requires me to dress his hair. I must be in Lucknow without delay; and these gentlemen will travel with me. Not a servant must be touched. Are there not villagers enough?"

The officer said nothing in reply; but bowed, and went his way. Nor did we murmur at being thus taken under the protection of the little hero of the curling-tongs—not of the razor, for he did not shave the king. The barber was satisfied; we were satisfied; and if the nawab was not, he never let us know the fact—we heard nothing more of the want of servants.

Arrived in the neighbourhood of Lucknow, we found the king was anxiously awaiting us in the palace whence we had set out—Dilkushar.

"You have left me long by myself, gentlemen," said his majesty, when we made our appearance one morning whilst the barber was officiating as usual; "you have left me long by myself, gentlemen, in this dull place."

"Your majesty travels more swiftly than ordinary men can do," was the reply of one of our party.

"I am glad you are come: I have heard of the plundering of the camp by those rebellious villagers; may their fathers' and mothers' names be reviled! The barber has been telling me about it. Let me hear it all again."

We told what we saw, and only what we saw. The king's anger grew fierce as he listened.

"To think," he stammered forth, "to think of the wretches daring to put their defiling hands on the clothes worn by me and by my wives. By my father's head, but they shall pay dearly for it."

"The nawab, I have heard, your majesty," said the barber, "has seized the principal of-

fenders; and is bringing them here to await your majesty's pleasure."

"They shall die, every one of them: no power on earth shall save one of them, if there are a hundred."

Such was the sentence of the "refuge of the world."

We saw those miserable wretches afterwards as they were being brought to the palace. They were certainly ferocious, cut-throat-looking fellows enough. Each was strapped down to a charpoy, like a drunken man on a police-stretcher in England; and all of them had cuts of swords or stabs of daggers about their persons, their wounds unbound and unattended to. There were probably a dozen of them. The fatal order was given, and their heads were cut off the same day. Whether they actually were the principal delinquents in the plundering of the encampment or not, I cannot of course decide; the nawab's word was taken for it that they were. It certainly was his interest to appease the king by some such sacrifice; and if these poor wretches had been only harmless villagers, seized for the purpose by the lawless soldiery who attended the nawab, it would have been

no worse than things which constantly take place in India—not in native states only. A great crime was never yet committed there, but the police were sure to find out some poor wretches who should suffer as the criminals, and who, they were convinced, if you believed them, were the actual perpetrators.

Summary justice was the rule in Oude. Except in Lucknow there were no jails; so that when a man was taken up for a theft, if the suspicion was strong against him, or the swearing hard enough, off went his head forthwith. The chucklidars had not time for the administration of justice after the European fashion. Bad as "Company's law" may any where be, it is my honest conviction, that the people of Oude would be a thousand times better off under a European magistrate—ignorant though he might be of their dialect, and unable to understand their evidence—than under the summary chucklidars.

CHAPTER V.

FAVOURITISM.

The barber's monthly bill—Nuna—Rise and fall of the Cashmere girl—The poet-dancer—Caprice—A friend from Calcutta — Silver-stick — The elephant-fight — Royal favour—Mr. and Mrs. Smith—The killut—My friend's departure.

With such a sovereign, and amongst people so generally submissive to authority as the inhabitants of India, it will be readily believed that the caprice of favouritism knew no bounds. The barber was an extraordinary instance, of course, of a man obtaining and retaining the king's affection; although he could scarcely speak the language of the country, and the king could express himself in English but imperfectly.

Of the title of nobility, the extensive authority in the palace, the monopoly of European supplies, showered upon the head of the

favoured little man, I have already spoken. He was also head of the menagerie, a sort of park-ranger in fact. I was once witness, and only once, to the length of the monthly bills which he presented to his majesty.

It was after tiffin, or lunch, when we usually retired from the palace until dinner-time at nine o'clock, that the favourite entered with a roll of paper in his hand. In India, long documents, legal and commercial, are usually written, not in books or on successive sheets, but on a long roll, strip being joined to strip for that purpose, and the whole rolled up like a map.

"Ha, khan!" said the king, observing him; "the monthly bill, is it?"

"It is, your majesty," was the smiling reply.

"Come, out with it; let us see the extent. Unrol it, khan."

The king was in a playful humour; and the barber was always in the same mood as the king. He held the end of the roll in his hand, and threw the rest along the floor, allowing it to unrol itself as it retreated. It reached to the other side of the long apartment,—a goodly array of items and figures,

closely written too. The king wanted it measured. A measure was brought, and the bill was found to be four yards and a half long. I glanced at its amount; it was upwards of ninety thousand rupees, upwards of nine thousand pounds!

The king looked also at the total.

"Larger than usual, khan," said he, as he did so.

"Yes, your majesty, the plate, and the new elephants, &c. &c."

"Oh, it's all right, I know," said the king, interrupting him; "take it to the nawab, and tell him to pay it."

The signature was affixed, and the bill was paid.

"The khan is robbing your majesty," said an influential courtier to the king some months afterwards; "his bills are exorbitant."

"If I choose to make the khan a rich man, is that any thing to you,—to any of you? I know his bills are exorbitant; let them be so; it is my pleasure. He *shall* be rich." Such was the king's indignant answer.

But the barber was by no means the only example of the capricious favouritism of his majesty. Two particular instances I well re-

member of caprice pushed to the very verge of extravagance,—yet caprice by no means unusual in despotic sovereigns, particularly oriental.

One of these cases was that of a Cashmere dancing-girl. She was eminently handsome; with the large black eyes peculiar to the East, and that perfection of physical form more frequently observed in India than elsewhere, on account of the dress. English women buy their shapes ready made for them in cloth and whalebone; Indian women exhibit those forms which the Almighty bestowed upon them.

This Cashmere girl, Nuna by name, delighted his majesty all the more because the agent who had engaged her in the Punjab had said little about her merits. There was a pathos about her voice in singing,—a plaintive pathos, as she sang of the happy valley where she had been brought up; there was a languor with a drooping sadness about the large black eyes, and an indifference and ease of manner about every movement, all very charming to hear and see.

She was introduced only as an ordinary nautch-girl; but, fortunately or unfortunately

for her, the other entertainment of the evening had been an utter failure, and a languid attention was bestowed upon her. The king looked, listened, was pleased, and expressed his pleasure. Nuna's eyes glowed with triumph and exultation as she heard his words; you could see the heaving of her bosom as she tried to compose her agitated thoughts. "Shavash! shavash!" (bravo! bravo!) shouted the king; and the poor girl's colour came and went, with pride and pleasure, as in a hectic fever. Blame her not, good reader; it was a king who was thus applauding, and two of that king's six wives were of humbler origin than Nuna. Many a dancing-girl in India has given heirs to its proudest thrones. The mother of Maharajah Dhuleep Singh, heir of Runjit Singh, the lion-king of the Punjab, was a dancing-girl; and Maharajah Dhuleep Singh has been the honoured guest of the Queen of England.

Blame not poor Nuna, then, if she felt intoxicated with joy. For a little I thought her excitement would have overcome her; but no, in a minute she was herself again. Every eye at our table was bent upon her. She recovered her composure, and danced and sang better than ever.

"You shall have a thousand rupees for this night's singing," said the king.

A thousand rupees, a hundred pounds,—a fortune to a poor Cashmere girl!

When the king was leaving the table for the harem, he would have no support but Nuna's arm. He went off, leaning his head upon her shoulder; and Nuna's colour went and came more rapidly than ever. It was indecorous, however, for his majesty to introduce a nautch-girl into the harem,—custom prohibits such introduction in India; but little recked he of customs that interfered with his caprices.

The next evening, no other nautch-girl but Nuna would be heard. She was richly decorated; jewels glistened on her arms and ankles; the flush of triumph was on her cheek.

"You shall have two thousand rupees (200*l.*) for this night's singing," exclaimed the king; and again was he borne off by Nuna from the table.

This went on for many evenings so. The king's liberality apparently knew no bounds; and the court bowed before Nuna. The king's wives no longer remembered that she was a nautch-girl. The female attendants, who had

regarded her the first evening with contempt, were first civil, then respectful, then subservient and fawning.

"I will build you a house of gold, and you shall be my Padshah Begum* some day, Nuna," exclaimed the king at length in a drunken fit of enthusiasm one evening. Nuna's favour was at its height.

Our dinners were interrupted for a week by some native holidays. We saw nothing of Nuna during that week. At its conclusion she re-appeared again, looking and singing and dancing as well as ever.

"Boppery bopp!" exclaimed the king, yawning as he gazed on her, "but she wearies me. Is there no other amusement this evening? Let us have a quail-fight, khan."

The barber rose to order in the quails. The king looked at Nuna with languid satiety.

"I wonder how she would look in a European dress," he observed, half to himself, half to the tutor, who sat next to him.

No one replied. The barber re-appeared,

* The chief wife,—the queen,—properly the first wife of the king. The Padshah Begum of Nussir was a daughter of the King of Delhi. The exclamation above was simply a drunken bravado.

and the king made the same observation to him.

"Nothing is easier, sire, than to see how she would look," was the barber's reply.

A gown and other articles of European female attire were sent for from the barber's house, for he was a married man; and when they were brought, Nuna was told to retire and put them on.

The quails came, and the fight proceeded on the table between the rival cocks.

Poor Nuna re-appeared in her new costume. A more wretched transformation it is hardly possible to conceive. The clothes hung loosely about her in an eminently dowdyish way. She felt that she was ridiculous. All grace was gone; all beauty was hidden. It was distressing to see her disheartened look as she took her place again.

The king and the barber laughed heartily at her plight, whilst hot scalding tears coursed down Nuna's cheeks. The attendant females had no pity for her, and chuckled at her disgrace, turning up their pretty lips, just as Englishwomen used to do, in virtuous indignation, when they exclaimed,

"Impudent minx!"

For days, nay for weeks, did poor Nuna so re-appear, a laughing-stock. The king would see her in no other dress. Every thing she did was displeasing. She asked permission again and again to leave the court and return to Cashmere; but such permission was denied her. She interceded with the barber; but it was useless. His heart was of stone.

The Mohurrim* intervened. For forty days we saw nothing of the king, except occasionally at a morning durbar. During the Mohurrim there was no dancing, there were no European dinners in the palace. The king had made a vow, before coming to the throne, that if ever he *did* come to it he would keep the Mohurrim, not for ten days, as other people did, but for forty; and he kept his vow.

The Mohurrim came, and we saw nothing more of poor Nuna. She never after appeared in the palace. What became of her I could never discover; and the barber was either as ignorant as myself, or pretended to be so. His conjecture was, that she had been given as a slave to some of the Begums, and was in the harem; but a eunuch told me she was not. Her name

* Particularly described in Chapter XI.

was once mentioned in the king's presence by me in an inquiring sort of way; but he took no notice of it.

The other instance was one in which we felt less sympathy with the king on the one side, and the subject of his favouritism on the other, than we did for the ill-fated Nuna.

He was proceeding, with his usual retinue, along a public road that ran through the rumna or park. We were all going to Chaungunge, one of those small palaces at which the fights of wild-beasts usually took place. The king was in an open carriage, thoroughly European in its equipments; his Irish coachman, a comical character, on the box, and four beautiful cream-coloured Arabs beneath him. It was a delightful day; and the king ordered the coachman to walk the horses, in order that he might enjoy the fresh air a little. It was the month of December, and the air was mild and balmy, the sun's rays by no means oppressive.

We were riding a little behind the carriage, the body-guard following us. Occasionally one or the other rode up to the carriage, and conversed, hat in hand, with his majesty. We always took off our hats when he turned towards us or addressed us. The

tutor was riding by the side of the carriage at the moment when a half-naked native, of tall stature and fine muscular development, emerged from the side of the road, and began dancing, and chanting a wild melody. The king turned to regard him. One or two troopers would have driven the fellow away; but his majesty called out to them to desist, and at the same time ordered his carriage to stop. It was the merest caprice that made him do so; at another time he would probably have laughed heartily at the troopers chasing the vagrant.

Peeroo, for that was the wild fellow's name, was delighted with the attention he attracted to himself. The whole cavalcade was stopped whilst he went on with his uncouth dancing and the nasal twanging of an irregular song, which he had composed himself. Some happily-turned compliment or ingenious piece of flattery in the song arrested the king's attention. He was pleased, heard the fellow to the end, and ordered a native attendant to give him five gold mohurs—a sum equal to 8*l.*

"I will hear you again at the palace to-morrow," said the king, as he drove on; whilst Peeroo assured him in reply, that the favour

of the asylum of the universe was to him what the heat of the sun was to the palm-tree.

Peeroo was a poet, in his own wild way; and, unlike poets of old, had little bashfulness. He made his appearance next day at the palace, and offered to sing a new song; but the king would hear nothing but the one that had first charmed him. Day after day did the lucky Peeroo make his appearance at the palace; and day after day did the king hear the same melody, finding apparently ever new delight in it. Largess was showered upon the head of the fortunate minstrel, and he began to be somebody in Lucknow. Before a month had passed away, the nawab, imitating his master, gave presents to Peeroo; the commander-in-chief did the same; Rajah Buktar Singh, the head of the police, followed suit, and money flowed fast into the open palm of Peeroo.

There was every probability that the adventurer would one day stand high amongst the nobles of Oude, and people bowed to him as he passed. "But surely this could not last?" exclaims the reader. One would suppose not, certainly; but it did last notwithstanding. Apartments were prepared for Peeroo in the palace. His formerly nearly naked form was

clothed in purple and fine linen. The nawab and the commander-in-chief and Rajah Buktar Singh, the three leading natives of the court, spoke to him as to an equal; and right jauntily did Peeroo carry his fine clothes and his new honours. When was there a poet yet who thought he got his deserts?

At first daily, then weekly, then monthly, and, in fine, rarely, did Peeroo sing his songs before his majesty; but he still continued a favourite. When I left Lucknow — about eighteen months after we had first seen him emerging from the side of the road, like a wild man of the woods, and in danger of being chased like a wild beast by the troopers— Peeroo was a noble, and a noble of nôte, in the court of Lucknow. I have forgotten the title which he received; but he was made a Singh of course, to which I doubt not Rajah was subsequently prefixed; for Peeroo was a Hindu. Rajah and Singh are Hindu titles, I believe; Nawab and Meer are Mussulman.

And now that I am on this subject of favouritism, I cannot do better than bring in an account of the visit of a friend of mine from Calcutta,—since sheriff of Middlesex,—who particularly pleased the king.

I had been some months in Lucknow when he wrote to me from Allahabad that he was returning to England, and had determined to see something of the upper provinces before he went. His object in writing was to know whether, if he came to Lucknow then, there was any chance of his seeing any of the animal fights, any thing of the court, any thing, in fact, peculiar to Lucknow, and for which the capital of Oude was famous.

My correspondent had made a good deal of money as a merchant in Calcutta. He had been an intimate friend of mine. I was anxious to oblige him. Men who have made their fortunes seldom find their friends disobliging. I wrote to him forthwith, telling him to come at once; that I could show him the lions of the palace, give him a good view of the king, and take him through the menagerie. More I could not promise. Talking, however, with a courtier-friend on the subject, he remarked that the barber could easily get the king to have a good animal fight,—of elephants, for instance,—if he felt so disposed. "Let us try at all events," he added; "there is no harm in trying."

There was a billiard-table in the barber's

house, maintained by the king for the use of his European suite, at which we frequently assembled. One or other was almost always to be found there about the middle of the day. I found the great little man busy playing a game himself with the captain of the body-guard.

"A friend of mine (Mr. R. of Calcutta) is coming over from Allahabad to see Lucknow," said I to the favourite; "I suppose he can see the menagerie."

"Certainly," said the barber, graciously; "I will give you a *chobdar* (a silver-stick in waiting) to accompany him, if you like."

The barber was park-ranger, and the superintendent of the menagerie; his chobdar, therefore, would suffice to show us all that was to be seen there.

"I suppose there is no chance of an elephant-fight?" said I, in a careless, off-hand sort of way, as I watched the game.

"Canon and pocket both, captain, by jingo! —Eh? I don't think there are any elephants *must** just now," was the barber's reply.

* That is, in that excited condition usually called *le rut*. It is only when in this state that the elephant will fight. The females are never fought.

After a pause of a moment's duration, he turned round to me again, and asked abruptly:

"Is your friend a mercantile man? would he do a little in the way of investing money for me in Company's paper, do you think?"

"He is a mercantile man. You have heard of him, doubtless. R. of R. B. & Co. He has made his fortune; but I have no doubt that he would do any thing reasonable to oblige me."

"Then it's all right. I'll settle the fight. If there are no elephants *must*, we can have tigers or rhinoceroses, perhaps. Count upon me. Off the red again—that's the game, captain. I owe you fifty rupees."

I went away well content.

My friend arrived on the following morning. I went to the private durbar to hear what was said about the animal fight. The barber was dressing the king's hair as usual; and as he dressed it, conversed with his majesty.

At length, in a pause of the conversation, he observed:

"Your majesty hasn't had any fights lately."

"No," said the king; "I'm sick of them.

I don't think, though, there are any elephants *must.*"

"There are, your majesty. I was informed so this morning."

"Do you want to have one?" asked the king.

"If your majesty so wills it, yes. Mr. R., one of the richest of the Calcutta merchants, has arrived; and as he is seeing Delhi, Agra, and other places, we don't want him to go away without good impressions of Lucknow."

"Certainly not," said the king; "and you can make him useful besides, I suppose, in Calcutta or England. Eh, khan?"

"Your majesty discovers every thing," said the wily barber.

It was settled that the fight should come off the following day, about one o'clock, at Chaun-gunge. I returned to my friend, to apprise him of the fact.

"You must be civil to the barber," I concluded, "for he has done it all for you."

"Civil to him; who would not be civil to him?—a king's favourite and a noble!—to be sure I will."

Mr. R., of R. B. and Co., had evidently the primary qualifications necessary for a good courtier.

The *chobdar* came in due time; and we sallied forth with him to inspect "the lions" of Lucknow before going to the menagerie to see the tigers. Of these "lions" I must afterwards say a few words; but I cannot interrupt my story now to describe them. Of the tigers I shall have plenty to say hereafter.

Before the magical wand of that silver-stick (the *chobdar*) every thing flew open: the palace; the offices of government; the military stores; the Tophkhana; the Emanbarra, too, which Bishop Heber (somewhat profanely, one would say, were he not a bishop) calls the Mussulman cathedral; the mosques; the gardens; Constantia; the menagerie and the park.

On the following morning we drove out to Chaun-gunge, where all was prepared for the elephant-fight. It was the usual scene of such encounters, a small lodge, like a country-house, with large enclosures in its neighbourhood, situated three miles from Lucknow on the other side of the Goomty.

Securing another chobdar for the purpose, I placed my friend in an apartment beneath, whence he could have a favourable view of the fight in the court-yard adjoining. I could not remain with him; for it was my duty to ascend

to the gallery above, and attend upon his majesty. The kettle-drums—emblems of sovereignty in Oude, and only borne before the King and Padshah Begum or Queen—the kettle-drums announced the arrival of "the refuge of the world." I ascended to take my wonted station, excusing myself to my friend.

The king soon made his appearance, and took his seat upon a sofa prepared for his reception; the female fanners took their places behind him. We stood, some leaning over the parapet, some with a hand on the corner of the sofa, on each side.

"Mr. R. from Calcutta is stopping with you," said the king, addressing me.

"He is, your majesty," was my reply.

"And where is he?"

"He is beneath, Sire, in an apartment looking out upon the court-yard."

"Why did you not bring him here?"

"I could not so far presume upon your majesty's goodness."

"Pshaw, nonsense; let him be brought; he will see nothing there."

Had I ventured to introduce him without the king's direct command, he might probably have been ordered out of "the presence."

I went below forthwith.

"The king commands me to bring you up to him," said I.

"Many thanks to his majesty, but I had rather stop here," was his cool reply.

"You must come. It would be an insult not to come."

"Some men have greatness thrust upon them," said he, as he prepared to mount to the gallery.

"Stop, stop, not so quick," said I, detaining him; "you must not go before the king empty-handed. You must offer a present of some gold mohurs."

"I shall do nothing of the kind. What! pay a gold mohur for looking at him?"

I explained that it was a mere form. That the king would nod, or touch the coin, as he felt disposed to be cool or cordial; and when that was once done, he might put the money in his pocket again. I had sent off to borrow the coins. They came; and my friend, duly prepared, ascended, with a white handkerchief on his open palm and the pieces of gold on the handkerchief. He drew near the king. His majesty looked keenly at him for a moment; and then placed one hand under his, and

touched the money with the fingers of the other hand. It was a mark of the greatest cordiality, and he ought to have been greatly pleased and flattered. Instead of being so, he looked puzzled. As he afterwards told me, he thought the king was going to take the money; and he was thinking of shutting his hand and preventing him; "for these natives are not to be trusted," said he, as he told me this. But he was speedily relieved by the king withdrawing his hand; and he then put the money into his pocket forthwith.

The signal was given, and the elephants advanced against each other. The fight was an ordinary one—nothing remarkable about it—ending in the flight of one of the combatants. My friend seemed to enjoy it amazingly, and the king was delighted with his honest admiration. Before the contest ended, his majesty had become so much fascinated with his new acquaintance, that he invited him to sit beside him on the sofa. Mr. R., doubtful whether this was quite right, and seeing us all standing, hesitated, and declined, saying he was "very comfortable." Nothing could be more rude; for the king intended to do him a great honour. At another time such conduct might have drawn

down one of the darkest frowns, and one of the abruptest orders to leave "the presence" upon the offender. But the king was in an excellent humour, laughed at the *brusque* reply, and repeated his invitation. Mr. R. looked at me distressed, the laughter making him fear he had been guilty of some unintentional rudeness. I beckoned him to sit; and down he sat on the extreme verge of the sofa, most uncomfortably. The attendant females now divided their fanning between the king and his honoured guest.

At length the spectacle concluded; we returned to our elephant. I attended the king as he entered his carriage.

"We dine alone to-day; bring your friend with you," said he, as he rested for a moment upon the arm of the favourite.

"You are in luck, my friend," said I, as I mounted the elephant after Mr. R. "You are to dine with his majesty."

"The devil I am!" was his irreverent exclamation. "I had rather a thousand times dine alone, or with you."

"It must not be. In truth, you are already a favourite. It was a great honour he did you, in asking you to be seated."

"An honour I would gladly have dispensed with. Standing was infinitely more comfortable than sitting on the knife-like edge of that sofa."

Yet, with all his depreciation of the honours conferred upon him, I saw that Mr. R. was well pleased at heart to have made so favourable an impression. I had not much difficulty in getting him to accept the king's invitation. He evidently began to suspect that nature had intended him for a courtier, not for a merchant; and he paid more attention to his toilette, in consequence, that evening, than he had ever paid before.

When we followed his majesty into the dining-room, he would have his newly-found friend seated next to him at dinner.

"Perhaps, master, you will let Mr. R. sit beside me," said the king, turning to the tutor; and the tutor made way forthwith. This was another honour; but my friend Mr. R. was beginning to become so accustomed to honours, that he accepted it with the greatest possible *sang froid*, as if, indeed, to sit beside a king at dinner was a thing he had been accustomed to all his life.

As course succeeded course, and one bottle

of champagne popped pleasantly after another, the king's heart opened. "The greatest of my friends is in England now," said he; "and you are going there too."

This "greatest of his friends" was a former resident, with whom the king had been on very intimate terms; let us call him Mr. Smith, that name will do as well as any other. Mr. Smith had a very captivating wife; and scandal did say that the king was fonder of Mrs. Smith than of her husband. All that, however, was before *my* time in Lucknow, so that I can only speak as rumour reported. Mr. Smith left Lucknow, quoth rumour, with seventy-five lakhs of rupees, that is, with 750,000*l*. So large was the amount invested in Mr. Smith's name in Company's paper, that an investigation took place, —an investigation conducted by the Bengal Government with closed doors; and the result was that Mr. Smith resigned the service, and returned to England.

"The greatest of my friends is in England now," said the king; "and you are going there too?"

There was pathos in his majesty's words—a pathos conceived of sentiment and born of champagne.

"And who had the honour to be your majesty's greatest friend?" asked Mr. R., somewhat boldly.

"Wah, wah, but it was Mr. Smith—he was once resident here," was his majesty's reply.

"Mr. Smith!" exclaimed my friend, "Mr. Smith! I was his agent. I knew him well."

"You knew him, my friend, my good friend, my very good friend; you knew him, did you say? I loved him, and—well, it's no matter now. Boppery bopp! but I could cry over it. Fill your glasses, gentlemen—a bumper, a brimming bumper to Mr. Smith."

The bumper was drank, a tumbler of champagne was poured incontinently down every man's throat.

"And now, gentlemen," said the king, "fill your glasses again—to the brim, gentlemen. Two bumpers to Mrs. Smith."

Two bumpers disappeared—two tumblers of champagne rolled whizzing down the throats of us all.

The king was fast succumbing. His sentiment and the champagne were too much for him.

"Shall you see my best friend, Mr. Smith, in England?" he asked.

"I must see him. I have business to transact with him," was Mr. R.'s reply.

The king took off his beautifully-jewelled watch—a watch of exquisite workmanship, that had cost 15,000 francs in Paris; watch and chain, he took them both off; and throwing the chain round my friend's neck, "promise me," said he, "promise me as a—hic, hic—as a gentleman, that you'll put that chain round Mrs. Smith's neck as I put it round yours—hic, hic—promise me."

"I give you my word of honour as a gentleman, I will, if she'll let me," was Mr. R.'s prudent reply.

"Tell her it comes from me, and she will; —hic, hic—khan, go and order a *killut* for my friend, a *killut* of some worth, and—hic, hic—add five hundred gold mohurs to it."

The killut or king's present was brought —two Cashmere shawls of exquisite workmanship, and a handkerchief for the neck. The king himself put the shawls and the handkerchief on his newly-found friend, being assisted therein by the barber; and Mr. R. perspired amazingly, for it was very hot; perspired, and professed himself highly honoured. The revel continued into the small hours of the morning. His

majesty could talk only of Mr. and Mrs. Smith, his very good friends, saying far more than it would be safe for me to put on record.

Our palanqueens awaited us—the revel was over. The king was borne into the harem after an affectionate leave-taking with Mr. R.; and, still accoutred in his dress of honour, I followed my friend down to the portico, where our vehicles stood. The distance was not great; but the stairs were very wide.

Next morning, before we had concluded breakfast, a servant of the nawab made his appearance with a bag of gold mohurs, five hundred in number, which he placed upon the table, as a part of the killut of the "refuge of the world" for R. Saheb. Mr. R.'s first impulse was to refuse accepting it. I assured him that he could not offer a greater insult to the king, which was the case. Yet it was not without much talking that I persuaded him to retain the 800*l.* thus thrown into his purse. Court etiquette required it to be accepted unhesitatingly; to have refused it would have been to say that it was not enough, and that he was determined to insult his majesty in return.

A messenger from the king made his appearance shortly after, requiring my attend-

ance in the palace. I lost no time in presenting myself before his majesty, who exclaimed, as soon as he saw me,

"I am delighted with your friend—I am charmed with him; tell him, if he will stop here, and take service in my household, he shall be my very good friend."

The barber was evidently uneasy at this; for he met me at the door, and asked me,

"Do you think Mr. R. will stop?"

"I cannot tell," was my reply; "he seems pleased that the king took so much notice of him."

I returned to my house, and reported the king's message. It was useless, however. England and home presented greater attractions to the exile than the favour of a monarch. He was grateful, but determined. That evening he left Lucknow.

The reader may feel disposed to remark here, that this lavish expenditure—thousands of rupees and hundreds of gold mohurs bestowed upon his minor favourites, and nearly ten thousand pounds a month paid occasionally for the barber's bills, must have soon emptied his majesty's treasury. And the reader's remark is well-founded and just; for, though

the revenues of Oude are nominally upwards of a million and a half a year, yet, out of that, troops had to be paid, and the expenses of a court maintained. This, however, is to be remembered, that Nussir's father, Ghazi-u-deen, left his treasury well filled, and Nussir emptied it,—that besides the ordinary revenue, there were confiscations and fines constantly made and levied, to a far greater amount than the king's presents; and that the wealth of the other members of his family, which was vast, was occasionally put under contribution. Notwithstanding all this, however, for the last year or two of Nussir's reign there was a great want of money in the palace of Lucknow.

CHAPTER VI.

THE "LIONS" OF LUCKNOW.

The throne-room—The *levée*—The Emanbarra—Constantia—General Martine—Mosques and houses—Apartments underground—Lucknow beggars.

THERE is little more to be said about the royal palace—the Fureed Buksh—than what I have said about it already. Its extent, its numerous courts, its tanks or ornamental ponds, its gardens, and its extensive out-offices, all mingled and commingled together, were its chief external characteristics. Its rich hangings, its profuse gilding, its gaudy ornaments, its groups of curiosities, its dazzling lustres and sparkling chandeliers, were the chief peculiarities of the interior of the state apartments.

The throne-room alone is deserving of especial notice. Like all the other state-rooms, it had partaken of the alterations introduced by Nussir's European mania. Rich

scarlet-and-gold hangings covered the walls, imposing enough in their appearance. A dim religious light came from the upper windows, which enhanced the solemnity of the royal receptions. A few full-length portraits of the royal family of Oude were visible here and there between the hangings — portraits by no means badly done. Bishop Heber justly remarks, that the portrait-painter of the first king, Ghazi-u-deen, might have won distinction in London or Paris. The throne itself occupied the upper end of this large hall, and was a structure of great value. It consisted simply of a platform about two yards square, raised several feet above the floor, and approached in front by six steps. Upon three sides of it a golden railing extended. The sides of the platform were of solid silver, richly ornamented with jewels. The former king and the nawabs of Oude had been accustomed to sit in oriental fashion (after the manner of tailors with us) on a rich cushion placed on this platform; but Nussir was too much Europeanised for that. He had a splendid chair of gold and ivory placed there instead of the cushion or musnud.

A square canopy, supported by poles,—the

whole of wood, covered with beaten gold,—hung over the throne. Precious stones ornamented this canopy and these poles in great numbers. A magnificent emerald, said to be the largest in the world, was conspicuous in the front of the canopy above. The hangings, like those of the room, were of crimson velvet, with rich golden embroidery and a fringe of pearls. A gilt chair always stood upon the right of the throne for the resident.

On the occasions of public durbars, or councils of state, the chief nobility of Oude, and any English officers whom the resident chose, were presented to the king. They advanced with the usual present in their hands, just as I have formerly described, salaaming low as they came. The king touched the present with his finger, if disposed to be very gracious, or bowed distantly if anxious to display resentment. The nawab or prime-minister then took the present, and laid it on one side of the throne, and the presenter retired backwards to the right or left—usually to the right, if a European; to the left, if a native. When all had been presented, the king placed a necklace of honour on the resident, and the resident returned the compliment. They then

advanced into the centre of the hall, where necklaces were bestowed upon those whom it was the king's intention to honour, or whom the resident wished to be honoured. These necklaces are called *haarhs*, and are usually formed of silver ribands. We of the household frequently got them, and invariably sold them afterwards to some of the native jewellers about the court. They varied in value from five to twenty-five rupees (10*s*. to 50*s*.).

After these ceremonious levees were concluded, the king usually conducted the resident to the door of the apartment, poured otta of roses on his hands at leave-taking, and exclaimed "*Khoda hafiz*," God be with you. His majesty then made his way in all haste to the private apartment, where we awaited him at lunch. Taking his seat, he would toss off the crown with very little ceremony, throw his robes aside, snap his fingers impatiently, and exclaim, as he seated himself:

"*Taza be taz*,* it's all over, thank God! Boppery bopp! but I am dying of thirst; how wearisome all this is!"

The king's Emanbarra, called the Shah

* The beginning of a native song. Here it means nothing more than *fiddle-de-dee* in English.

Nujeef, is unquestionably the finest building in Lucknow, in an architectural point of view. An Emanbarra is a building raised by that sect of Moslems called Sheahs, for the celebration of the Mohurrim, which shall be more particularly described in a subsequent chapter. Every family of distinction has its own, and the owner is not unusually buried in it.

The royal Emanbarra stands near the "Constantinople gate" of Lucknow (the *Room-i-durwaza*)—a gate built on the model of that which gave to the court of the sultan the title of "the Sublime Porte." Both structures, the gate and the Emanbarra, are elegant, and harmonise well with each other. Two square courts extend in front of the building of the Emanbarra, beautifully decorated with rich tesselated pavements. The inner of these courts is raised several feet above the level of the outer.

The Emanbarra belongs to that style of architecture aptly called by Bishop Heber "the oriental Gothic." It combines the minarets of the Mussulman temple with the pointed domes of the Hindu, and is, on the whole, a lofty, imposing, well-proportioned edifice. Its central hall is upwards of 150 feet long by 50

wide; and its brilliant character may be conceived when it is stated, that a grave writer, who had evidently visited it, asserts that Asoph-u-dowlah, one of the most magnificent nawabs of Oude, spent a million of pounds sterling in furnishing it with chandeliers and mirrors.* This statement I regard, however, as a gross exaggeration.

Let us pass from the Emanbarra to Constantia—a whimsical pile of buildings of vast extent, erected at a great expense by General Martine, a Frenchman. Having entered the Company's service towards the end of the last century as a private soldier, he was afterwards transferred to the king of Oude's army, and rose step by step to the rank of general, amassing enormous wealth as he rose. He was a prudent and successful cock-fighter; and Saadut Ali, the reigning sovereign of those days, was fond of betting with him.

General Martine left 100,000*l.* to found a school for orphan children in Lyons, his birthplace; a similar sum for founding a similar institution in Calcutta; and an amount nearly equal for a third in Lucknow. Each of these institutions is called *La Martinière*, as directed

* *The Calcutta Review*, vol. iii. p. 381.

by the founder, and all are flourishing and useful. Constantia, his residence, he left to the public as a serai or caravansery. It was called, I was told, after his first love, a French maiden, whom he had left behind him in France, and who died long before he attained to wealth and honours. To prevent the nawab from confiscating the building and estate, the General was buried, by his own directions, beneath it; for a Mussulman, however unjust, will respect a grave. His tomb, in a sort of crypt beneath, is shown to visitors. A white marble bust of him stands on a sarcophagus, supported by two figures of sepoys, coloured! The whole is in execrable taste.

When the General died, his furniture was sold by auction; and the Company's agents purchased the chandeliers and lustres of Constantia to decorate the governor-general's palace in Calcutta. They got them a dead bargain, for the king of Oude would not bid against the Company; and the honourable Company was delighted with its commercial sagacity. No Yankee pedlar could have done the thing better.

When one has said that Constantia is vast and whimsical, all has been said about it that

needs be said. Some part of the grounds reminded me of the gardens of Versailles, particularly a sheet of water in the form of a cross, with groves of clipped trees on either side; but, on the whole, although it is apparent that vast sums have been spent to produce the result that one sees before him, yet that result is altogether *bizarre* and wanting in harmony.

The courts and fountains are European, the turrets and domes are essentially Asiatic in their character. The rooms have a certain European air about them, whilst the verandahs and the blinds are thoroughly Indian. Extent and incongruity are the characteristics of Constantia.

The mosques and bazaars of Lucknow do not differ so materially from those of other oriental cities as to render any particular description of them necessary. The warlike air given to the latter by the armed men who constantly pass and repass in them is that which peculiarly distinguishes them. Men of rank are usually accompanied about the streets by their armed retainers, the more numerous in proportion to their rank; and it is by no means an unusual thing to witness fights between such bands in the narrow streets of the

lower town. The shouts and warlike sounds which give notice to distant citizens of such encounters are sufficient to deter the more peaceful or the more timid from visiting the quarter whence they issue, whilst the turbulent or valorous are attracted to the neighbourhood by the clamour. Much blood is often thus shed —I say *is*, for the Indian newspapers assure me, in their monthly budgets, that Lucknow is still what it was—the Lucknow of 1855 differing in no essential particular from that of 1835.

One peculiarity of the better class of houses in Lucknow I have not formerly mentioned—the fact of their having underground apartments, to which the inhabitants retreat during the excessive heats of the hot season. Strange that men burrow in the earth to escape intense cold in one part of the world, and adopt exactly the same means to avoid intense heat in another. Extremes meet.

In the palace we had such an apartment, one sunk below the level of the surrounding court-yards; and to us, the European members of the household, that apartment was intensely close, its atmosphere stifling and unpleasant. I would rather endure the extreme heat of the upper rooms, than the close, stifling, confined

air of this refuge for "the refuge of the world." Fortunately, we were not often called upon to occupy this lower apartment, for the king did not appear to like it. Indeed, the constant fanning which was carefully maintained around him when he was in the palace, would be sufficient to prevent the heat of the most suffocating day from telling much upon him. He only occupied the lower apartment occasionally, because it was the fashion of the nobility of Oude so to do at particular seasons; and as those fashions from which he derived neither comfort nor amusement influenced him little, his annual burrowing was by no means long-continued.

Of the swarms of beggars which infest the streets and bazaars of Lucknow, and which may be regarded as one of its sights, other writers have said so much, that it is not necessary to dilate upon the matter here. Visitors to Italian cities are too much accustomed to such sights to make it a special peculiarity of Lucknow; and as all the world travels now-a-days, "doing" France, the Rhine, and Italy, in the shortest conceivable space of time, it is not necessary that I should enter particularly into the beggar-plague of Lucknow. Some

have remarked that there were more old women amongst the beggars of Oude than in any other part of the world; and I think there is some foundation for the remark, although I cannot pretend to account for the fact. Diseased, deformed, diminutive wretches of both sexes; some young, some old and withered, some whining out their lamentations incessantly, others contenting themselves with occasional groans; are to be met with in almost every quarter of Lucknow; and the habit of bestowing large sums in alms, when "great" people move about, and at religious festivals and ceremonies, doubtless tends to encourage the trade and increase the numbers of idlers. If men can get any thing in the tropics without working for it, they will exhibit an amazing amount of patience in waiting; the waiting faculty, in fact, is only fully developed between the tropics. There is a peculiarity, however, about Lucknow beggars, that would strike the European traveller, however well up in the continent, as strange. All the male beggars go armed; some of them carrying their arms jauntily too, as if by no means ashamed of their profession, nay, rather glorying in it. "The light of the sun has shone upon my lord's

slave, and he will be fed," says a bold impudent fellow with a huge moustache, a sword, and a shield, as he puts out his hand for an alms. *You* are the light of the sun that has shone upon him; and the compliment, he thinks, is worth a labourer's day's pay. You turn from him in disgust; and he then as quietly enlightens you as to his opinion of your female relations (your mother and your sisters particularly), in language too plain and energetic for translation—in language rather bold and expressive than elegant.

That this profession of beggary is by no means regarded as a thing to be ashamed of in Lucknow, is proved by the airs which the beggars give themselves, and the cool way in which they will settle how much such and such a noble ought to pay to their class now that his wife has given him a son and heir, or now that his daughter is to be married. They know the value of such ceremonies and festivals to a pice. I have heard of one beggar of distinction who had an elephant of his own, and daily went round the city on it collecting alms from his patrons.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MAN-EATER.

A deserted street—Deaths—The man-eater loose—Burrhea—Manœuvering on both sides—A tiger-spring—Foiled—The man-eater victorious—Burrhea's successor—The wild buffaloes—Triumph of the man-eater—His fate.

I WAS driving in a buggy one morning through one of the finest streets of Lucknow. A friend accompanied me; and we were proceeding from the vicinity of the Goomty to one of the king's palaces. The deserted condition of the streets as we advanced surprised us. There was no inhabitant to be seen for a considerable distance; and where one was visible, he or she was hurriedly departing from the broad line of road on which I drove. So many strange things occur in a city exposed to the capricious tyranny of a man without any restraining principle, that we felt by no means that astonishment which any one fresh from England

would have felt under the circumstances. Some execution, we whispered to each other, some fresh *example*, nothing more.

At length, in the middle of the road, we came upon a trampled bloody mass, bearing still some resemblance to a human figure. We stopped the buggy to inspect it. It was the corpse of a poor native female; but terribly disfigured. The body was bruised and lacerated in all directions, the scanty drapery torn from the form; the face had been crushed as if by teeth into a shapeless mass; the long matted hair, which fell in bundles over the road, was all clotted with blood. It was altogether as disgusting a sight as one could well see any where. Apparently she was quite dead; and we did not delay. A courtier must not interfere with the vengeance of a king; so that, even had we seen signs of life, I candidly confess I do not think we should have descended from the vehicle to succour her, impressed as we were with the conviction that the execution was by the king's orders.

On we went; still no sign of inhabitants—the houses every where closed—breathless terror reigning on all sides. It was not long before we came upon the figure of a youth, simi-

larly mangled and destroyed, lying also in the road, more towards the side, however. On the top of an adjoining house we saw one of the king's troopers standing, looking intently up the road along which we were advancing.

"What is the matter?" I asked.

"The man-eater is loose," was the reply; "wallah, but he has turned again. Look out for your safety, sahebs; he is wild to-day."

I had heard of a savage horse belonging to one of the king's troopers that went by this name,—*admee-kanawallah*, the *man-eater*; because he had been the destruction of many men.

"He is coming, sahebs," shouted the trooper from the house-top; "take care, take care!"

Far along the road in front of us we could see the wild brute—a large bay entire horse he was, as we afterwards found—shaking a child whom he had seized as he held it in his mouth, shaking it savagely, but evidently coming towards us.

In another moment he had seen the vehicle, threw the child upon the road, dead no doubt, and rushed forward with savage fury to attack us. There was still a considerable space to be

passed by him; but not a moment was to be lost. We turned rapidly round, our horse almost unmanageable from terror, flying over the ground; and away we went in a mad gallop down towards an enclosure with iron gates that we had passed a short time before. The man-eater pursued with hearty good-will. We could hear his iron hoofs clattering over the road as he advanced.

We gained the enclosure—turned into it—my companion leaped from the buggy, and shut the gate. The whole was the action of a moment. It fortunately shut with a heavy bolt which fell into a socket; and just as the fall of the bolt secured our safety, the man-eater came tramping up. His head was covered with blood, his jaws steaming with recent slaughter, his cheeks horrid with coagulated gouts that had most probably spirted from his victims. There he stood, looking savagely after us through the iron railings, with distended nostrils and glaring eye-balls, altogether as ferocious-looking a monster as any wild beast. Our horse trembled at the sound of his impatient snorting—trembled as if shivering with cold! He glared at us through the iron bars, and walked round to the side; but all was hard iron

railing, substantial too. There was no entrance to be got. Satisfied that he was baffled, at length he turned round, rattled his iron heels against the bars, and then scampered, with head erect and cocked ears, down the road, towards an archway which was built over it. Here a party of troopers was waiting for him. A noose was thrown skilfully over the uplifted head. He was upset, muzzled, and conducted to his stable. And the poor woman and youth and child? you ask. I heard nothing more of them. Doubtless their friends bore them off and buried them.

At dinner that day I took the liberty of mentioning the circumstance to his majesty.

"I have often heard of that man-eater," said he; "he must be a furious beast."

"He is more savage than a tiger, your majesty."

"A tiger—good—he shall fight a tiger. We will see what impression Burrhea will make on him."

Burrhea was the name of a favourite tiger of the king's, so called from a village at the foot of the Himalayas near which he had been taken. The king would never allow him to fight with other tigers or with elephants; he

was a pet, and was only allowed to enter into contests with such animals as he could easily vanquish.

It was on the following day, in the morning, before lunch, we were all assembled at Chaungunge in the gallery of a court-yard, about sixty yards square in extent,—a court-yard with buildings all round, and a verandah below. Thick bamboo railing had been put up in front of the verandah, so as completely to encircle the court-yard, and to form a sort of enlarged cage. The man-eater had been enticed into the enclosure by means of a little mare—a *tattoo*, as the country horses are called —of little value.

The king and his usual suite of female attendants had taken their places in the gallery, he on a sofa placed there for the purpose, they behind him. We stood on his majesty's right and left, leaning on the parapet or on the sofa. Every one commanded a full view of the court-yard, and the ladies seemed to relish the prospect as much as any one.

The order was given, and Burrhea's cage was brought into the verandah. A door in the bamboo-railing, prepared for the purpose, was drawn up, the cage-door was opened, and Bur-

rhea bounded into the court-yard, lashing his sides with his long tail, and glaring furiously upon the man-eater and his little female friend. A more beautiful tiger than Burrhea it would not be easy to discover in all India. His glossy coat, regularly streaked, shone in the enclosure, in pleasant contrast with the frowsy covering of the little mare. Even the well-kept hide of the man-eater was sadly wanting in brilliancy when compared with the glittering skin of Burrhea.

The tiger had been kept without food or drink from the previous day to prepare him for the assault. He glared savagely at the horses as he entered, and commenced slowly stealing along towards them. The man-eater kept his eyes fixed on the eye-balls of his enemy. Not for an instant did he take them off; his head lowered, standing in an easy attitude, with one foot slightly advanced, he awaited the attack, moving as Burrhea moved, but always with the eyes intently fixed. As for the poor little mare, she was transfixed with fear—paralysed—apparently unable to take a thought for preservation. She stood cowering in a corner, awaiting her fate. With a slight bound Burrhea was upon the mare in an instant. A blow

of his paw threw her over on the ground; his teeth were fastened in her neck, and he drank her blood greedily. It was simple butchery; for there was no resistance.

"It will make Burrhea only the more savage," said the king, rubbing his hands gleefully. The European courtiers assented; and the female attendants, ignorant of the language, but certain that the king was pleased, were mightily pleased too. They exchanged glances of approbation and of satisfaction ere they turned again to watch the proceedings in the court-yard.

Burrhea might have been from three to five minutes enjoying his draught of blood,—not more,—his head turned towards the man-eater all the time, and his eyes for the most part fixed on him. The man-eater, on his side, expressed no uneasiness. An impatient snort or two escaped him; that was all. With protruded neck and cocked ears, and glaring eyeballs, he watched his enemy intently, still standing in an easy attitude of attention, as if prepared for immediate action.

At length Burrhea was satisfied, or else no more blood was forthcoming; and taking his claws out of the dead animal, and shaking

himself as he did so, he began to go stealthily round the court-yard, like a cat stealing a march on a rat. He made no noise whatever. The large paws were placed one after the other upon the ground, the soft ball of the foot preventing any sound. Slowly were they raised and depressed; whilst the long back as slowly made its way forwards,—now raised at the shoulders, now at the hind-quarters, as the legs were moved,—the skin glancing backwards and forwards as if hardly belonging to the bones and muscles beneath it. It was not a scene to be forgotten: the king and his attendant females gazing intently above; the European courtiers straining with eyes and ears to catch every movement and every sound; the man-eater in the centre of the court-yard slowly turning as the tiger turned, his head and ears and eyes and neck ever the same; the tiger stealing along, so cat-like in aspect, and yet so gigantic in strength. Not a sound was audible but the grating of the man-eater's feet, as they were raised and lowered again,—not a sound other; but all was mute expectation and anxious gazing.

At length the tiger bounded with the rapidity of lightning upon his enemy; the horse

was fully prepared. It had evidently been Burrhea's intention to seize the head and fore-quarters; but the man-eater was too adroit for that; and, by a quick diving motion of his head and shoulders, had received his antagonist upon his muscular haunches behind. The claws sank deeply into the flesh, whilst the hind-feet of the tiger made a grasp or two at the fore-legs of the horse; but there was no time to secure his position. The man-eater lashed up with his iron heels into the air with tremendous vigour, and in a moment Burrhea was sprawling on the ground, not at all the better for his attack. We could hardly perceive, however, that he had been thrown upon his back,—partly against the bamboo-railing, partly on the ground,—when he was on his legs again, gyrating as before, moving stealthily round as if nothing had happened. With an indignant snort the man-eater resumed his former position, and awaited another spring, his muscular haunches bearing evidence in their lacerated skin, and in the gouts of blood which disfigured them, of the sharpness and strength of the tiger's claws.

"Burrhea will kill him yet!" exclaimed the king, turning to the nearest European.

"Undoubtedly, your majesty," said the courtier.

Cat-like did Burrhea pace round and round again, his broad round head ever turned towards his wary antagonist. Each foot with its brawny paw was lifted and lowered again in succession, noiselessly as before, whilst the beautifully-streaked hide played over the bones and muscles freely. With distended nostrils and flashing eyes, the man-eater watched again as intently as ever, exactly in the same position as formerly,—the head and neck lowered and protruded; the ears cocked rigidly; the eyes fixed in a glazing stare at the stealthily-gliding tiger; and one fore-foot ever slightly advanced, to admit, doubtless, of that rapid diving and thrusting forward of the shoulder and head, by which he had formerly succeeded in getting his antagonist upon his hind-quarters.

For fully eight or ten minutes did this monotonous circling of Burrhea continue, the man-eater ever facing him and gazing intently, an angry snort now and then bursting from the horse as he turned. Burrhea opened his huge jaws widely at times, and licked up the drops of blood which still clung to them; and once (but once only) he paused for a moment

over the dead mare, as if meditating a second draught. But the irresolution was only momentary, and the monotonous walk was continued.

At length the decisive moment arrived again. Burrhea was standing almost over the carcass of the dead mare, when he sprang once more,— sprang so suddenly, that we in the gallery started at the sight, expecting it though we were; and more than one of the attendants on the king gave forth a stifled exclamation of alarm. There was no premonitory growl, or display of any kind. It was as if by galvanic agency the tiger had been suddenly lifted into the air in the course of his monotonous gyration.

Man-eater was not taken by surprise, however. His head was ducked still lower than before; his fore-quarters seemed to glide under the springing assailant; and again were Burrhea's claws dug deeply into his haunches; but further over on this occasion than on the former. The broad round head of the tiger projected for an instant beyond the tail of the horse, whilst his hind-claws were sunk deeply into the man-eater's breast. For an instant we saw him quivering unsteadily in that posi-

tion, crouching with his belly on the horse's back, clinging to his prey for an instant, but only for an instant. Again did the ferocious stallion lash up with his hind-feet, almost as if he would throw himself over on his back. His iron heels came with crushing force against the jaw of Burrhea, and in a moment the tiger was sprawling helplessly upon the ground, once more stretched upon his back.

It was but for an instant, however, that Burrhea thus lay; but, when he resumed his feet, and began running round the bamboo enclosure, it was quite apparent that it was no longer to attack again, but to escape. His jaw was broken; and, with his tail between his legs, he cried out loudly with pain as he ran round, not unlike a whipped spaniel. The man-eater watched him, as before, intently, evidently fearful of a *ruse*, and finding it difficult to keep up with his rapid motion. But it was no *ruse:* Burrhea was looking eagerly for some method of escape, crying almost piteously as he did so. "His jaw is broken," was whispered by some of the male servants below, who watched him from the verandah. The sound reached our gallery, and the king heard it.

"Burrhea's jaw is broken," he exclaimed to us; "shall we let him escape?"

"As your majesty pleases," was our answer.

The signal was given—the door of the cage was opened, the bamboos opposite to it raised, —and Burrhea rushed in to bury himself in the furthest corner.

Proudly did the man-eater snort and paw when he found himself thus victor. He first scampered up to the mare, and snuffed there a moment; and then, spurning her with his foot, with head aloft and tail arched, he trotted to one point and another of the bamboo railing, as if anxious to get at the attendant servants. His blood was up; and tigers or men, he did not mind which were his assailants now, or which he assailed.

"Let another tiger be set at him," shouted the king to the natives, after he had watched him for a moment or two. "Damn him; I will have my revenge for his destroying Burrhea;" the latter observation was addressed to us, the attendant European courtiers, and was in English. We rubbed our hands, smiled, said it was most just, bowed, and awaited further sport.

"That was a terrible blow he struck with his hind legs," said the king.

"It was a tremendous blow, your majesty.

I heard it sounding on Burrhea's jaw-bone," was the answer of one of our little company.

The keeper of the tigers here interposed. A message was brought to ask if he might venture into the presence of his majesty.

"Let him come," was the kingly order.

The keeper of the tigers approached.

"May it please your majesty's greatness, but the tigers were all fed two hours ago," said he; "but the best we have your majesty shall see in the court-yard in a moment."

"And why were they fed two hours ago, you scoundrel?" asked the king.

"May it please the royal greatness of your majesty, but that was the ordinary time for feeding, and they are fed daily," said the poor man, as he salaamed lowly, trembling in every limb.

"You shall go in to the man-eater yourself, you slave, if this tiger does not attack him."

The tiger's cage was soon after in the verandah; and all eyes were turned eagerly towards it. The keeper of the tigers withdrew with no pleasant anticipations, be sure of it; for what the king said, he would think little of doing.

Wine, which had been ordered when Bur-

rhea beat his retreat, was now brought; and the king pledged his guests in a brimming tumbler of iced claret. The drink was refreshing, because it was so cool; for the court-yard was oppressively hot, at least to us the Europeans of the party. As for the king, the attendant women fanned him, by gently waving around him the bushy fan formed of the peacock's tail. It was a pretty and a graceful sight to see the finely-turned arms, naked to the shoulder, with a jewelled bracelet or two on the wrist and above the elbow, waving about as the fans moved upwards and downwards, or from side to side,—the fair fanners taking care not to interrupt the king's view as they gracefully put the air in motion,—the *fair* fanners, I say, for fair they were, not darker than Spanish brunettes certainly, if so dark, and many of them boasting forms of exquisite mould and symmetry,—forms which the fine muslins of Dacca, with their gold and silver thread embroidery, beautifully adorned.

The tiger's cage was brought, and placed in the verandah opposite the portion of the bamboo railing, which could be raised at pleasure. A passage was made, and a tiger came leisurely forth and surveyed the court-yard.

He stood for a moment irresolute on the threshold, as if doubtful about advancing; but a spear's point, dexterously administered behind, left him doubtful no longer, and he scampered into the enclosure. The bamboo railing was let down; the door of the cage was shut again; and the tiger leisurely surveyed his intended antagonist. After gazing for a moment at the man-eater, who turned to face him, he went up to the dead mare, licked a drop or two of blood from the neck, and then gazed at the man-eater again, who stood as before, on the defensive.

This tiger was somewhat larger than Burrhea, but not so beautifully streaked. There was something, too, more light and graceful about every movement of Burrhea. In fact, this fellow was evidently quite a plebeian, with huge muscular development, and shuffling gait. Perhaps, however, he only wanted the stimulus of hunger to make him active and graceful as Burrhea had been.

The man-eater stood, as I have said, upon the defensive, at the side of the court-yard opposite to that at which the tiger had entered. For his part, however, the tiger seemed to have a very incorrect idea of the reason why he was

placed in his present position,—he evidently did not understand what was expected of him; for, squatting down upon the mare, keeping his face, like a cautious soldier, to his doubtful friend the man-eater, he proceeded to tear up the dead animal leisurely, exhibiting a strength of claw, of limb, and of jaw, in doing so, that must have awakened uneasy sensations in the man-eater, if he reflected on his position at all.

"Remove that carcass," shouted the king, annoyed; "fools that you were to leave it there!"

The order was obeyed forthwith. An iron rod or two, heated to redness, drove the tiger away. A noose was passed over the neck of the dead mare, and in a moment it was hoisted out of the arena. The tiger, evidently annoyed at the way in which he had been disturbed in his repast, stretched himself at full length in the middle of the court-yard, licked his lips, and growled at the men in the verandah, looking now at them and now at the man-eater, who still stood prepared for the contest as before.

It was not easy to reach the tiger where he lay. A few ineffectual efforts were made

to rouse him with the hot rods; but they were too short. At length, a spear, of portentous dimensions was introduced, and he was struck with it. He bounded to his feet, seized the spear, ran along its length to the bamboo railing, and there tugged valorously at one of the bamboo rails. This was too dangerous a sport to allow him to indulge in, and he was soon dislodged, and sent howling away with the hot irons. He scampered once or twice round the enclosure, man-eater eyeing him intently all the while, and facing him still as he turned in every direction. All the efforts of the attendants were unsuccessful, however, in getting him to assail the horse. He was burnt, and speared, and enraged; but vented his rage on the bamboos, and showed his glittering teeth to the men; nothing could induce him, apparently, to attack the man-eater, whilst, on his part, man-eater seemed to have no disposition at all to attack him.

It was an evident palpable failure, and I began to dread that the poor keeper of the tigers would certainly be introduced into the court-yard; but the king had forgotten all about his threat, and shouted out that man-eater was a brave fellow, that they should re-

move the tiger, and see what the horse could do with three wild buffaloes.

There is, perhaps, no animal so fierce and terrible as the wild buffalo, when thoroughly roused,—heavy, clumsy, and awkward though he be. I have frequently seen him put a good-sized elephant to flight, goring it terribly as it fled.

The cage-door was opened, the bamboos were lifted, and the tiger bounded into his den with infinitely more alacrity than he had shown in getting out of it. There was a pause of a few minutes—the wine circulated in the gallery again—and three uncouth-looking, unwieldy buffaloes were driven into the enclosure beneath, one by one.

With that peculiarly stupid gaze of theirs, their huge heads moving unmeaningly from side to side, they pushed their way on into the middle of the court-yard.

The man-eater retreated as they advanced. Their huge forms disconcerted him not a little. Even the appearance of the second tiger, after his deadly encounter with the first, had moved him less than the apparition of these uncouth monsters, with their broad flat foreheads, their wide-branching horns, and the

ample black rotundities of their figures. He retreated step by step, snorting as he did so; but more with apprehension than with anger. Like all bullies, he would have rushed headlong at them had he seen any signs of fear; but their evident want of all terror of him was plainly the cause of his embarrassment.

Huddled confusedly together, the three black brutes thrust their heads to one side and the other in idiotic gaze; now snuffing vainly at the ground, now watching the attendants in the verandah, now contemplating the pillars of the gallery, and anon inspecting the redoubted man-eater, as if vainly asking by their gaze what possible good could be attained by having them there. As to attacking the horse, the idea evidently never entered their heads. He, however, took courage as he saw them irresolute and uncertain. Pawing the ground first, then snuffing at them with distended nostrils, then advancing a step, then snorting with doubt, he slowly came nearer, step by step, almost inch by inch—they, on their part, paying no heed to his movements, but still crowding together, and tossing their heads about in an eminently asinine way.

Step by step, I say, did the man-eater advance. At length his head almost touched the protruding side of the nearest buffalo. He snorted and sniffed, and smelt vigorously as he stretched out his long neck towards the unwieldy brute; the buffalo, for his part, heeding him but little, or not at all. Familiarity breeds contempt, says the old proverb, and certainly it did so in this instance; for after snorting, and sniffing, and smelling at his ease, advancing the while a step or two nearer, man-eater wheeled suddenly round, lashed up furiously behind, and rattled his iron hoofs in gallant style against the ribs of the meditating buffalo. The attack was so sudden, so utterly unlooked-for, and so violent withal, that the buffalo was stunned for a moment; his companions shaking their heads in chorus, as if opining that there was something in that.

The king laughed outrageously as he gazed at their confusion.

"The man-eater deserves his life," he shouted out; "let him escape." The order was obeyed forthwith—he was adroitly muzzled, and led forth to his stable, a victor and a conqueror, to end his days in peaceful glory.

"I shall have an iron cage made for him," exclaimed the king; "and he shall be taken care of. By my father's head, but he is a brave fellow."

He *had* an iron cage made for him—one twice the size of many modern London dining-rooms; and there, roaming round the walls of his iron house, man-eater exhibited his teeth to admiring visitors, snapped at them valourously, and often showed how he had assaulted the ribs of the buffalo, by playing the same tune on the bars of his cage.

When I left Lucknow, the man-eater was still one of its sights.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CAPRICE OF DESPOTISM.

Rajah Buktar Singh—The refectory—Royal wit—Buktar's ill-advised pleasantry—Arrest—Sentence of death—The Rajah's family—Public disgrace—Interference of the Resident—The iron-cage—Food-riots—The bazaar—A friend in need—Restoration.

Of the various native officers of his court, there was, perhaps, none with whom the king was more familiar than Rajah Buktar Singh, nominally a general in his majesty's forces. I say *nominally* a general; because the chief military force in Oude,—the only force in the country indeed really formidable,—belonged to the Company, and was under the orders of the resident. Still, the king had his regiments of horse and foot soldiers, clothed and accoutered partly after the Persian fashion, partly after that of the honourable Company. Of these forces there were probably forty or fifty thousand, cavalry, infantry, and artillery; and

of these the nawab's son was the commander-in-chief, and Buktar Singh was "the general." In our parties and entertainments at court, Buktar was usually addressed as "the General,"—seldom by his name. So fond was the king of practical joking and boyish pranks,—in which Buktar, on the one side, and the barber on the other, were zealous proficients,—that a spectator, casually introduced, might very probably have supposed the court a school of overgrown children, temporarily released from restraint. Buffoonery of the most silly and ridiculous character was constantly promoted by his majesty's example, and entered into with hearty good-will by Buktar Singh amongst the natives, and the barber amongst the European attendants.

Yet Buktar was by no means a man of despicable ability. He was proud of his position at court, and determined to retain it as long as possible. Hence his compliance with the frivolities of his sovereign; and, with oriental duplicity, he entered into these frivolities as if with his whole heart. There were sound sense and practical experience of life in the man, however, beneath this outer coating of absurdity. He was respected by the natives as a

man who knew how to rule, and who understood, too, the difficulties of his position. "The General" he was called; but, had he been styled chief officer of police, the title would have been more applicable; for his troops performed little other duty than those similar to what we are accustomed to see performed by police in England,—little other except that attendance upon processions and court pageants which forms so large a proportion of the out-of-doors life of an eastern court.

It will be readily understood, therefore, that Buktar was a man of high consideration amongst the native community. His wealth, the authority of his family as one of the heads of the Rajpoots, his intimacy with the king, his office,—all conspired to render him a man of note, of influence, and of power. The nawab, or prime minister, was a little envious of the consideration he enjoyed; but as long as Buktar was the favoured of the king and the barber, he had little to fear from the envy of the nominal prime minister. They professed, of course, to be the best of friends. Buktar and the nawab embraced and praised each other, salaamed, and uttered high-sounding terms of adulation and courtesy, with all that

attention to etiquette for which the natives of Hindustan are remarkable; and yet the Nawab was a Mussulman, and "the General" a Hindu.

We had been witnessing some sport in Mobarrack Munzal, one of the king's numerous country-palaces in the neighbourhood of Lucknow. Wearied with the monotony of animals tearing each other to pieces, and of victories gained by bloodthirsty wild beasts, we had retired to a small refectory which adjoined that portion of the park in which we happened to be at the time. Iced claret and a biscuit or two were pleasant and refreshing after the labour of gazing at renewed combats. The king was in great vein, and joked and joked again with unbounded hilarity; Buktar, as usual, accommodating himself readily to the royal humour, laughing at witless sallies, and professing to enjoy hilariously the lively boisterousness of "majesty."

At length it became time to leave the refectory, as the hour for lunch drew near, although still early in the day. The attendant *suwarrs* were called; the captain of the body-guard mustered them in the usual order, and information was brought that all was ready.

The king rose from the table,—he was dressed in his favourite European costume,—thrust his right hand into his hat, and, elevating it on his arm, allowed it to swing round on his thumb as he held it aloft. Every thing was as usual, no signs of a storm brewing in any quarter; we had *so* left the refectory, there and elsewhere, often before. It was a habit of his majesty, when pleased, to swing his black European hat round on his raised hand, the hand being thrust into it, and thus supporting it. I was only a few paces from him as he walked forwards; Buktar was near me. We were all rising to gain the door, after the king, without order or ceremony; for so he willed it in these friendly meetings.

At length, as the king still twirled his hat, advancing,—there being a pause in the conversation,—he contrived to thrust his thumb out through the top of his hat. Like other hats, it had probably been made rather to sell than for wear,—although his majesty was somewhat particular to have every thing of the best; or, having been frequently subjected to the same rough usage before, the top had become injured. However it was, certain it is that he turned to us with his thumb stuck out at the

top, laughing as he did so, and expecting us, of course, to laugh too; which also, of course, we, like obedient courtiers, dutifully did. Buktar cried out forthwith, in Hindustani,—the *double entendre* being equally apt in both languages:—

"There's a hole in your majesty's crown."

It was evidently said impulsively, without premeditation, as a piece of wit; but unfortunately the efforts of the king's father and family to exclude him from the throne, in order to raise thereto his brother, had made him excessively sensitive of any remark upon his crown. Had it not been for the Company and the resident, he would never have worn it. Yet at another time, and in a different mood, the observation might have passed unnoticed.

The king's face became changed as he heard the remark. The joyous hilarity of a moment before vanished at once, and a dark frown brooded over his countenance. His keen black eyes shone fiercely as he turned round to me—I happened to be the nearest to him at the moment—

"Did you hear the traitor?" he asked, in a voice husky with rage; for his rage swelled, like his hilarity, in sudden gusts.

"I did, your majesty," was the beginning of my reply; but before I could utter any more, he had shouted out to the captain of the body-guard:—

"Take that man into custody forthwith. Go, Rooshun" (to the prime minister), "and take off his head."

It was a moment of appalling consternation. The king had absolute power of life and death over all the natives not in the service of the Company—absolute, unquestioned power; and such was his disposition, that any attempt to thwart his rage then would but have rendered it more violent and deadly. The captain of the body-guard—a European officer—and the prime minister, both advanced to Buktar, who stood with bent head, and hands extended before him palm to palm, in the ordinary attitude of obedience. He said not a word.

"The commands of the 'refuge of the world' shall be obeyed," said the prime minister, who, although apparently on the most friendly terms with Buktar, was evidently not displeased at his office. The rise and fall of men in courts ruled by a capricious despot are too sudden to cause much surprise in the breasts of those accustomed to such courts.

"Buktar is *my* prisoner," said the captain, leading him off, and giving us, his European associates, a meaning look as he went out,—a look that said, "Perform *your* part; I shall perform mine for the wretched man."

The king dashed down his hat on the ground, and stamped on it, as Buktar was led out, his anger still raging fiercely; for all that I have described was, of course, but the work of a moment.

"What would a king of England do to the man who insulted him thus?" he asked, again turning to me, with a countenance horrible from the working of rage. He stamped as he asked the question.

"His majesty would have him arrested as your majesty has done," was my reply; "and after trial he would be dealt with as was decided."

"So shall I do!" he exclaimed, continuing his advance towards the door slowly, and quite forgetful that the order had already been given for his execution.

"I shall inform Rooshun of your majesty's commands," said I, bowing as I passed him.

They were already in the saddle; Buktar between two of the horse-soldiers, and the cap-

tain in advance, whilst the nawab rode behind the troop. I informed him of what the king had said; and Rooshun did not thank me for the information in his heart, although his reply was, that he had trusted in the clemency of "the refuge of the world." There were many attendants near enough to hear; and the reply was intended as much for their ears as for mine. As for Buktar, he too must have heard and understood what I said; for it was in Hindustani, and loud enough for him to hear; but he did not so much as by turning his head indicate that he had heard it. Such caution men learn in courts.

"Buktar shall certainly die,—no power on earth shall prevent him dying; his head shall be cut off before it is dark," said the king to his friend the barber, as he ascended his elephant. No one ventured to say he should not. We, however, the European portion of his majesty's *suite*, knew full well that if the resident could be got to interfere, the unfortunate man's life was certainly safe, whatever might become of his property.

From the park in which this scene had occurred to the Goomty was but a distance of a few miles. The floating-bridge, a huge flat-

bottomed boat, or rather raft, with protecting sides, received us, elephants, horses, and all, just as we were; and in a few minutes we were landed on the Lucknow side of the river. This floating-bridge was reserved for the special use of his majesty and suite, and was always ready at one side or other of the river to receive its accustomed burden. An awkward primitive sort of contrivance it was; but then it was *exclusive*, and that tended much to make it prized and respected. For ordinary people there was the bridge of boats; the vulgar, but far more convenient means of transit from shore to shore, save in the middle of the day for an hour or two, when the central portion of it was opened, in order to permit the river-traffic to be carried on.

Arrived at the palace, his majesty seemed to be more reasonable and less excited. We were all anxious to know his intentions with respect to Buktar Singh. The subject was delicately introduced as we stood leave-taking, in a friendly way, by an influential courtier.

"He shall not die," said the king, "until a regular investigation has been made into the matter."

With this assurance we were fain to be

content; although it was not without fear and trembling for the consequences that we left the king to his native attendants. There was a large fortune to be confiscated, and to be divided amongst them. They were ever ready to counsel death and confiscation when the object was rich or powerful. The captain of the body-guard was deputed as the most proper person to inform the resident of the matter; but that gentleman did not well see how he could interfere, — it was an alleged case of treason by a native in no way subordinate to the Company; he, the resident, had no excuse for interfering whatever.

As we left the palace, those of us belonging to the king's household visited the unfortunate Buktar. He was thrust into a mean outhouse, formerly in the occupation of a servant of low caste, in the neighbourhood of the palace. Here he was guarded by two native sentries. The place itself, to him, a man of the highest rank and caste, was degradation and punishment enough. But when we entered, the condition of the miserable victim of caprice was lamentable to witness.

The only furniture the place contained was a rough native bed such as is used by na-

tive servants, called a *charpoy*, that is, a frame-work of rough wood raised on four short legs, and with coir cords passed from side to side above to support a mat or mattress. No mat or mattress was here, however. Every thing was done according to the king's order we heard, communicated to the captain of the body-guard by the nawab. All the garments of the disgraced chief had been removed,—his richly-ornamented turban, his magnificent oriental dress, his tulwar or sword, his pistols, his Cashmere scarf, used as a belt,—all had been removed. With a scanty cloth tied round his loins,—a cloth such as the lowest of the labouring classes wear,—he was lying, when we entered, on this uncomfortable couch, otherwise naked.

"What I said," said he, as we spoke to him, "was said in utter unconsciousness, in foolish playfulness. The king knows I never intrigued against him when his father and his family conspired to deprive him of his crown. I shall die, gentlemen; I know I shall die; Rooshun is not my friend; but, oh, good Englishmen, preserve my family from disgrace. Surely his excellency the resident will protect them, if you ask him. I am a

man,—I can bear torture and death; but my wives and children,—my aged bed-ridden father,—my wives, that have never seen the face of man save of their relations,—my children, who are all of tender years,—what will become of them when I am gone? Good gentlemen, promise me to say a kind word for them."

We gave him all the assurances we could. There was something poetical about his language,—in the energy of his sorrow and excitement. The whole scene was a touching one; and, surrounded though we were by the dark purlieus of a native court, with all its horrid traditions of cruelty and bloodshed, tears from the eyes of more than one courtier coursed down our cheeks as we listened to the wretched man.

"I have preserved this one jewel," said he; "they have taken all the rest." It was a large emerald of great value, which he had frequently borne on his finger. He put it into the hands of the most influential member of our little party. "Should my family come to want,—should they only lose their property, and be otherwise uninjured,—perhaps you will sell this for them. Do, good Englishman; but, oh, try and save them from the torture

and disgrace; and the blessing of the widows and the orphans will be yours."

Our interview was not a prolonged one. We re-assured him as much as we could, promised our interference to the utmost. We left him calm and resigned. As to his own life, he never for a moment thought it would be saved; for he had heard the order given for his execution, and he attributed the delay simply to an intention of inflicting torture upon him. He had made up his mind to this. "He knew the king better than we did," said he, as he shook his head mournfully. He had seen the most excruciating tortures inflicted upon men for less than he had done.

The promised investigation was to be held in the evening. We were to dine as usual with his majesty afterwards. Till then we took our way to our several homes, full of sad thoughts at the spectacle we had witnessed, at the scenes which had occurred that morning.

As we assembled in the ante-room of the palace that evening, the captain of the body-guard met us, and told us of what the resident had said. "God only knows what will be the result of all this,—would to heaven I were in any other position than that I now fill," he ex-

claimed vehemently; "the poor old bed-ridden father of Buktar, his wives and children too, have all been arrested, and thrust into the same degrading prisons." A native *peon* informed us that it would be half-an-hour before his majesty was ready to receive us. "Let us visit the family together," said we in a breath; "we can give them consolation; the resident will surely protect them." It was no idle curiosity, but a mission of mercy, that took us to the court-yard where the wretched family were imprisoned.

I have witnessed many heart-rending spectacles in the course of a long and somewhat varied experience; but I have no recollection of any other which affected me more deeply or painfully than the sight of this unfortunate collection of women and children. They were all treated as Buktar had been treated,—stripped of their fine clothes and their ornaments,—given only the same scanty covering that he had been allowed;—there they were, cowering like sheep and lambs awaiting the slaughter,—the old bed-ridden father, with his wrinkled skin and spare frame, through which the skeleton could be clearly distinguished, as the bones protruded in all quarters;—and he

was weeping,—weeping not for his own sufferings or dishonour, but for the woes of his son and of his son's wives. Young, delicately-moulded women, who had been nursed in every luxury, and brought up tenderly, whose faces had never been exposed before to the eyes of men,—there they cowered, huddled together, with their children, exposed to the rude gaze and brutal jests of the native soldiery who were scattered about the court-yard. One clasped her infant to her breast, and seemed to find some satisfaction in all her woe in fulfilling a mother's duties. Another sat in silent misery, with downcast face and drooping form, a Hindu Niobe. No sculptor could have imagined forms of more exquisite mould than two of them presented; whilst their colour was that brunette tint which captivates so much when contrasted with the jet-black locks of hair common to the regions of the sun. They had unloosed their dark tresses, that these emblems of sorrow might form some sort of covering for their shoulders; and they looked all the more lovely in consequence.

When they heard that we had come as comforters, and friends of Buktar, the cowering fear which had formerly possessed them gave

way to passionate entreaty and fervent expressions of thanks. The women and children threw themselves at our feet, and begged our intercession for the doomed culprit. It was pitiable to see them grovelling on the ground before us in all the agony of fear, and in all the abasement of commingled fear and love. It was not for themselves they sought protection and succour, but for him whose incautious words had brought them into that miserable position. Truly, if Hindustan is ever saved, it will be by the virtues of its women; for more honourable, more honest-minded, more nobly-endowed female humanity is not to be found in the most highly civilised regions of the earth than amongst the zenanahs of India. Europeans usually see the low and the vile only, and they judge them all by those; just as if a foreigner were to form his estimate of the women of England from those he sees crowding the streets of its large towns in gaudy colours and brazen boldness when the light of day has gone, and the brilliant illumination of gas-light has taken its place!

We promised, we re-assured, we calmed, we comforted these sorrowing creatures, old and young. We had ground for consolation;

for the resident had sent for the nawab, and had declared that whatever Buktar was guilty of, his family was innocent; and that there must not be any wholesale slaughter or indiscriminate torturing. The Company might permit the king to slay here and there; but the murder of a whole family in cold blood, the torture of unoffending women and children in groups, was more than they would permit. It might come to the ears of Europe; and then what a pretty piece of business it would be for the honourable Company and its governments in India!

We had not long to remain with the family of Buktar. The king would be furious did he find us missing, and learn that we had been comforting the traitor and his brood. We hurried from the court-yard, more disposed than ever to exert ourselves in behalf of the doomed "general."

The interference of the resident in behalf of his family was probably the saving of Buktar Singh's life. The nawab was thoroughly frightened when the great saheb himself informed him that he and the Company should hold him (Rooshun) responsible for any thing that befel the innocent family of the condemned

rajah. It did not suit either the convenience of the prime minister or the prospects of the European barber to be brought into collision with the resident; and, at the council held that evening, every voice was loudly or earnestly raised for clemency.

"Let it be so then," said the king, wearied of the matter, "let the traitor escape with life. Let his property, however, be confiscated; and let him be kept in a cage in perpetual imprisonment, banished from Lucknow."

Such was the sentence; and the nawab was to see to its execution. A Mussulman chief, from the north of Oude, was to set off on the morrow, in returning to his own district. It was decided that Buktar should go with him as his prisoner. But this was not enough.

"He must be disgraced," said the king, "as rajah never was disgraced before. Let his turban and his dress be brought—his sword and his pistols."

All was done as the king ordered. According to Hindu ideas, an indignity offered to the turban is the same as if offered to the owner and ordinary wearer of it. A *mehter*, or servant of the lowest class and rank—a

sort of house-scavenger—was ordered into the presence; and there and then, in presence of us all, defiled the unconscious turban with hearty good-will, to the king's great satisfaction. With hearty good-will, I say, did the *mehter* perform his part of the degradation; for, once defiled, none but himself would touch the turban or the clothes. They became from that moment his own property; and, when dried, doubtless ornamented on gala-days afterwards himself and his wife.

Next came the sword. It was broken into a hundred pieces, by a sturdy blacksmith introduced for the purpose. The pistols came next. The son of Vulcan was about to smash them with his weighty hammer, when he thought of looking to see if they were loaded. They *were* loaded. He paused. The king observed the action, and suspected the cause.

"Are they loaded?" he asked vehemently.

"May the 'refuge of the world' look benevolently on his slave—the pistols *are* loaded," was the blacksmith's reply.

"Yah, Hyder! but said I not well the man was a traitor of the worst stamp; how say you, gentlemen, now," exclaimed his majesty, turning to us, "was this an unpremeditated mat-

ter? You hear, the scoundrel's pistols are loaded?"

"It was but his duty as a general to have his pistols loaded to defend your majesty," said the tutor firmly.

"Ha! say you so? then, by Allah, I shall see if others think that a part of his duty. Let the captain of the body-guard be called. I want him instantly."

The life of the unfortunate man hung again in the balance, to be decided by the slightest breath of air. We were cautioned not to intimate by look or sound any thing to the captain as he entered. We knew that he wished well to Buktar, as we did; and yet a word from him might now be the means of bringing down destruction on the accused! The captain entered, advancing towards the king with the usual salaam.

"Captain ——," said the king, "was it the duty of Rajah Buktar Singh, that was—but rajah and singh no longer—to wear his pistols loaded or unloaded?"

A life hung most probably on the answer. We awaited it in breathless expectation. But the scene had been sufficient to inform the captain of the circumstances of the case;—the

waiting blacksmith—the king's earnest manner—the pistols deposited on the table—our anxious countenances;—and he gave his reply without hesitation.

"It is unquestionably the duty of the commander-in-chief and general of your majesty's forces to be prepared for any sudden danger that might assail your majesty. Their pistols would be useless unloaded."

"Let them be fired off and broken up, and then scattered to the winds," said the king, seeing that he was foiled again.

That evening the dinner passed as usual. The viands were criticised, the wine circulated, exactly as on other evenings; no one seemed to think for a moment of the unhappy family that awaited in one of the adjoining courtyards the sentence of banishment and imprisonment. The case was not even once alluded to in the course of the entertainment. As for the king, he quaffed his champagne, and watched the amusements, with his usual hilarity; his conscience seemed quite at rest, his remarks were full of attempted wit, of boyish extravagance, of frivolity, or worse, as on other evenings.

The next morning the resident himself vi-

sited the wretched family of Buktar Singh, assuring them of his interest in the case, and his determination to shield them from further disgrace. They blessed "the great saheb," as grateful women and children only can bless; his visit was balm to their souls, an assurance that they were not utterly deserted.

The very same day Buktar Singh and his family departed as prisoners in the train of the northern rajah. The alleged culprit himself was put into a large wild-beast cage, and otherwise somewhat hardly and harshly dealt with; but his family was more tenderly treated. The resident's interference had done wonders with the natives of all classes. Rich and poor, princes and sepoys, fear the *Koompanny Bahador* (the Honourable Company), and the resident, as its representative. To them this Koompanny Bahador is a terrible myth, that awes and terrifies. Amongst the very ignorant in India, it is no uncommon impression that the *Koompanny* is a frightful monster of portentous power and energy, dwelling in a far-off land, but able to see all that takes place in India; — whether man, or angel, or devil, they cannot say, but something awful and frightful unquestionably.

Buktar Singh was gone, and we heard no more about him, save that his relatives amply provided for his wants; and that the rajah, in whose care he was, found it his interest to treat him well. It is probable that, like most wealthy natives, he had large sums of money so secured and concealed, that when his property was confiscated, these remained untouched. Certain it is, that although Rooshun had been diligent enough in the confiscation, yet whatever Buktar wanted, he had money to procure; whatever little piece of bribery was to be done, either in the king's retinue or in that of the resident, ample funds were forthcoming for the purpose.

That year—for I may as well bring Buktar's story to a conclusion at once—that year there was a general dearth in Oude. The scarcity of rice caused prices to go up considerably above the average, not of that alone, the staple of native food, but of all other kinds of food. Discontent was the consequence, and there were troubles in Lucknow. The bazaar-owners were loudly accused by the poor of having produced an artificial scarcity, and riots occurred in consequence. When the king made his appearance in public, petitions

against the speculators were thrown into his *howdah*, or offered to him when he was on horseback by kneeling sufferers. It was annoying,—these petitions became a bore,—and he made his appearance but seldom in the city.

A year had rolled away since the disgrace of Buktar Singh, and still quietness was not restored; the petitions were still presented; his majesty was still bored to death with long-winded accounts of starving families and outraged property.

"There is evidently something wrong," said the king at length one day, at the durbar; "I never saw this discontent continue so long in Lucknow before."

The nawab hinted something about the crops.

"Bah, Rooshun, old woman that you are, don't talk of the crops to me," quoth his majesty; "I tell you there's something wrong. The later crops have been excellent. What do you think about it, master?"

"I think, your majesty, that there must be some mismanagement in the bazaars that requires looking into," said the tutor.

"Wallah, but I agree with you, master;

let us go this very evening and inquire into it. Let us all go in disguise, as the caliph used to do in Bagdad. I will go too; it will be both useful and agreeable."

The king had said it. He had got the idea thoroughly into his head, and nothing would turn him from it. Go into the bazaars we must in disguise, majesty and all. What we should do when we got there, or how effect any good, was never thought of. The king was soon ready, equipped as a common European; Rooshun was soon similarly transformed. Two of the European members of the household dressed themselves in like manner. The others were to lounge about the bazaar in the neighbourhood of the king, but not to appear to be of his party. The nawab and the captain of the body-guard both took measures against any surprise or sudden violence. The king's own family would be the first to seize the opportunity, did they discover the disguise; and there was no knowing but desperadoes might be sent to pick a quarrel, and to murder him. To prevent any such tragical occurrence, both the nawab and the captain of the guard, unknown to each other, ordered sepoys and attendants, well armed, to follow, in the ordinary

dress of Lucknow. Where all men went armed, their being so would not excite suspicion.

It must not be supposed that so many entering the bazaars, and keeping within a short distance of each other, would be likely to cause remark. So crowded are the eastern bazaars in the evening, that one must push his way along. They are always full; and the roads being narrow, many people might easily traverse them together, without the fact of their being together awakening observation.

On we went through the oily steaming crowd, redolent of unsavoury odours. Fierce Rajpoots and Patans, with their tulwars and shields jingling by their sides and on their backs, elbowed us and scowled. Well-bearded Mussulmans, pious and devout, observed, as we passed, it was no place for sahebs. Sleek Hindus smiled, and tempted us with their wares, flattering us in all humility with their words. At length we drew near a money-changer's, where there was more room. His coins lay scattered in little heaps over the large trays that served as tables. His portly figure was squatted in greasy sleekness in the midst. He sat on his bended legs, after the manner of money-changers in the east, and

tailors in the west. Two sturdy attendants lounged at a little distance, sufficiently far from the coins to prevent their helping themselves, sufficiently near to watch them and protect.

A merchant of some consequence, judging by his dress, approached the money-changer, and exchanged greetings. They salaamed with cordiality.

"Another attack on the rice-stores this morning, Mhadub," said the new-comer.

"Sad times, sad times," said Mhadub, shaking his head gloomily, as he looked towards our party, now advancing, to see if we needed his services. The king looked significantly round as he heard the remark and the reply; he would hear more, so he stopped at a neighbouring stall, as if to look at a native purchasing some *pawn*.* We went a little further on and examined some swords.

"It's very hard that a merchant can't sell his goods at what he likes, without being in danger of getting his property destroyed," observed the new-comer again.

"Very hard, very hard indeed; it wasn't

* A leaf with spices and a kind of lime rolled in it, used for chewing by the natives, as sailors chew tobacco.

so in times past," said the money-changer, shaking his head again; "there's nothing doing now. Change for a gold mohur? Certainly, my lord. Fifteen rupees, eleven annas, and four pie—four annas, eight pie *dustooree;* some people charge five annas, but I only four and eight pie. Bad times, bad times, as you say, Baboo."

"It wasn't so when Rajah Buktar was the king's minister; he kept the bazaars in order," said the Baboo.

The king started. He listened attentively, however, still, and advanced nearer to examine some brass drinking-cups.

"He did, Baboo, he did," replied the money-changer; "Rajah Buktar kept the bazaar in order, as you say:—bad times, bad times."

The Baboo passed on; he had said his say. I thought at the moment, and to this day I still think, he was sent there on purpose to say it,—that some friend or relative of Buktar's, hearing of the king's procedure, had taken this means of reminding his majesty of the disgraced "general."

The king returned to the palace ruminating deeply. A new idea had been put into his

head; and, like all men who totally want originality, he caught firm hold of it, and kept it there. He thought only of Buktar Singh, and what he had heard in the bazaar.

Two months after that, Rajah Buktar Singh was in his old place at court, resuming his duties and his honours as if nothing had occurred. The next harvest was abundant; and when I left Lucknow, Rajah Buktar was still "the general," and the head of the police, as before—in great favour with the king, nay, in greater favour than ever.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KING'S HAREM.

Female sepoys—The Begum's revolt—Female *bearers*—Slaves—Mrs. Meer Hassan's account—Eunuchs—The rooms of the harem—Seclusion of its inmates—Ignorance of nature—Dress—Amusements—The Padshah Begum's procession—Silver-sticks, troops, the kettle-drums and *bearers*.

We of the rougher sex never had an opportunity of seeng the interior of the harem, or witnessing the private life of its inmates. Notwithstanding this, however, we had accurate information enough on the subject. European ladies were allowed to visit the king's wives; the eunuchs, a privileged class, were accustomed to intrude without ceremony upon the privacy of the native ladies, and these eunuchs were constantly to be met with about the court. We were not left therefore to conjecture—much was hidden we were sure—but much also was patent to us, made fully intel-

ligible and plain to us by the reports we heard from others.

Of the living curiosities of the palace there were none the account of which will appear more strange to European ears than the female sepoys. I had seen these men-like women pacing up and down before the various entrances to the female apartments for many days before I was informed of their real character. I regarded them simply as a diminutive race of soldiers, with well-wadded coats. There was nothing but this fullness of the chest to distinguish many of them from other sepoys; and one is so accustomed to see soldiers in England with coats stuffed so as to make their wearers resemble pouter pigeons, that I took little heed of the circumstance.

These women retained their long hair, which they tied up in a knot upon the top of the head, and there it was concealed by the usual shako. They bore the ordinary accoutrements of sepoys in India—a musket and bayonet, cross-belts and cartridge-boxes, jackets and white duck continuations, which might be seen any where in Bengal. Intended solely for duty in the palace as guardians of the harem, they were paraded only in the court-yards,

where I have seen them going through their exercise just like other sepoys. They were drilled by one of the native officers of the king's army, and appeared quite familiar with marching and wheeling, with presenting, loading, and firing muskets, with the fixing and unfixing of bayonets—in fact, with all the detail of the ordinary barrack-yard. Whether they could have gone through the same manœuvres in the field with thousands of moustachoed sepoys around them, I cannot tell—probably not. They had their own corporals and sergeants; none of them, I believe, attained a higher rank than that of sergeant.

Many of them were married women, obliged to quit the ranks for a month or two at a time occasionally. They retained their places, however, as long as possible; and it was not until the fact of their being women was pointed out to me, that I perceived their figures were not always in the proportions allotted to the other sex. I have seen many a sergeant in England, however, whose figure was just as *outré* as those amongst them furthest advanced in pregnancy. Their appearance was a frequent subject of merriment with the king, who usually ended his *badinage* of them, however,

by ordering some present to be given to the delinquent—delinquent, properly so called, for there was an express order against such disfigurement, clothed in the plainest language and of the most absolute character, posted up in their barracks.

Of these female sepoys there were in all two companies, of the usual strength, or weakness, if the reader will have it so. Once during my residence at Lucknow they were employed by the king against his own mother. I have mentioned elsewhere, that when Nussir's father, Ghazi-u-deen, had resolved that Nussir should not succeed him, he had determined on getting his son into his own power, that, if need were, the youth might be put to death rather than mount the throne. His mother, the Begum, had then fought for him with all the bravery of a hero. She had armed her retainers, incited them by her example, and ultimately succeeded in baffling the king; but not until after a bloody contest had taken place, and the resident had been obliged to interfere to prevent further scandal. One would suppose that Nussir would never forget the gratitude due to his heroic mother for her defence of him when he was incapable of de-

fending himself. But as Ghazi had wished to act towards Nussir, so did Nussir wish to act towards his own son. The mother of Nussir took her grandson under her protection, and refused to give him up. The king then ordered her to leave the palace she occupied, and go to another. She suspected his intentions, and refused. Orders and threats would not do—the Begum was not to be intimidated. The king then sent his female sepoys to turn her out; but her retainers fought with and routed them. The balls firing on either side were whistling over my house at the time, and two or three penetrated at the windows. It was not until I found there was actual danger that I inquired what was the cause of disturbance, and prepared to leave my abode. Such was the state of things in Lucknow, that a few people killed, a few volleys of musketry fired in anger, were scarcely sufficient to rouse our curiosity. Fifteen or sixteen of the Begum's attendants were killed in this attack.

The end of the matter was, that the resident again interfered. The king promised not to molest his mother the Begum, or to touch his infant son, if she would remove to the

palace he indicated. The resident thereupon guaranteed the life of the child, and the Begum departed content. She put more faith in the word of the English gentleman than she would have put in the solemn oaths of the king and all his ministers! Truly it is not in Europe that one discovers the greatness of England, or the magic power that resides in the name of Englishman.

Notwithstanding the zeal of the old Begum and her maternal heroism, however, the infant boy did not succeed his father. Nussir adopted the fatal expedient of pronouncing him illegitimate by public proclamation; nay, even affixed royal notices to that effect on the gates of Lucknow, and the Indian government decided that, so stigmatised, the youth could not succeed. When Nussir was poisoned, shortly after the barber was driven out of Lucknow, the old Begum tried force again. She had the residency surrounded with her troops, and the youthful son of Nussir proclaimed. The resident, however, was not to be intimidated. Although in imminent danger of losing his life, he refused to recognise the prince. Orders were sent down to the cantonments for troops. The troops came,—

a few discharges of grape-shot amongst the threatening crowds dispersed them,—and one of the old uncles, whom Nussir had treated so badly, succeeded to the vacant throne. The old Begum and her youthful grandson, now a young man, are still alive in Lucknow, I believe. Her object had been a good one, and she had twice succeeded by force. In other times, and under other circumstances, that old Begum might have written her name largely on the pages of the world's history. All honour to her for her bravery and her heroism, — all honour to the English resident too, Colonel Lowe, whose firmness and intrepidity put an end to what threatened to be a very serious disturbance. The evils resulting from the suppression of the *émeute* were as nothing compared with what would have resulted from its success.

But I have been digressing in all this. I was led into the digression by the female sepoys.

Another class of attendants at the palace, peculiar to Lucknow, were the female *bearers*,* — labourers we should call them, perhaps. Their occupation was to carry the palanquins,

* A Hindustani, not an English, word.

and various covered conveyances of the king and his ladies into the inner courts of the harem. These female bearers were also under military discipline. They had their officers, commissioned and non-commissioned. The head of them, a great masculine woman, of pleasing countenance, was an especial favourite with the king. The *badinage* which was exchanged between them was of the freest possible character, — not fit for ears polite, of course; but the extraordinary point in it was, that no one hearing it, or witnessing such scenes, could have supposed it possible that a king and a slave stood before him as the two tongue-combatants. This very chief of the female bearers, I have since heard from one who was in Lucknow at the time, was the poisoner of Nussir,—bribed thereto by some member of the royal family.

Of the slaves in attendance upon the ladies of the harem there were great numbers, some hereditary, some newly purchased from poor parents, either on account of physical beauty, or from some peculiar talent which they possessed of singing, story-telling, shampooing agreeably, or such-like.

That discarded ladies were often made

away with in the palace, as in Constantinople of old, I have not the slightest doubt; and these slaves, or the eunuchs, were usually the instruments, I was told. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali* is able to tell more about these attendants on the harem than I can. They are not found in the court alone, but in every family of distinction in Lucknow.

"The female slaves, although constantly required about the lady's person, are nevertheless tenderly treated, and have every proper indulgence afforded them. They discharge in rotation the required duties of their stations, and appear as much the objects of the lady's care as any other people in her establishment. Slavery with them is without severity; and in the existing state of Mussulman society, they declare women-slaves to be necessary appendages to their rank and respectability. The liberal proprietors of female slaves give them

* In her *Observations on the Mussulmans of India.* Mrs. Meer Hassan was an English lady, who married a Lucknow noble during a visit he paid to England. She spent twelve years with him in India, and did not allow him to exercise a Moslem's privilege of a plurality of wives. Returning to England afterwards, on account of her health, she did not again rejoin him. Her book is dedicated "with permission" to the Princess Augusta.

suitable matches in marriage when they have arrived at a proper age, and even foster their children with the greatest care; often granting them a salary, and sometimes their freedom, if required to make them happy. Indeed, generally speaking, the slaves in a Mussulman's house must be vicious and unworthy, who are not considered members of the family." So much for the good lady's idea of slavery in Mussulman families generally. Listen now to an anecdote of slave-life in Lucknow, told with all that suggestive simplicity which usually characterises female authorship. The man who would say as much in plain language would shock the modesty of nervous ladies.

"I have heard of a very beautiful female slave who had been fostered by a native lady of high rank from her infancy. In the course of time this female slave *had arrived to the honour of being made the companion of her young master*, and still, with the lady's consent, resided with her. Her mistress, indeed, was much attached to her. The freedom of intercourse, *occasioned by the slave's exaltation*, had the effect of lessening the young creature's former respect for her still kind mistress, to whom she evinced some ungrateful returns for the many indul-

gences she had received at her hands. The exact nature of her offences I never heard; but it was deemed requisite, for the sake of example, in a house where some hundreds of female slaves were maintained, that the lady should adopt some such method of testifying her displeasure towards this pretty favourite as would be consistent with *her present elevated station.* A stout silver chain was therefore made by the lady's orders, and with this the slave was linked to her bedstead a certain number of hours every day, in the view of the whole congregated family of slaves. This punishment would be felt as a degradation by the slave; not the confinement to her bedstead, however, where she would perhaps have seated herself from choice, had she not been in disgrace, but the chaining in presence of the household."

The European lady has evidently shown the brightest side of the picture,—the darker shadows were perhaps concealed from her eyes. When the slave was ugly and repulsive, instead of being "young" and "pretty," young masters would not be likely to care what kind or amount of punishment was inflicted on them; and all Mussulman ladies are by no means of the an-

gelic temperament of the mistress of the slave in the foregoing anecdote. Jealousy and spite together, there can be little doubt, will lead sometimes to cruelty and revenge, even when the object of the jealousy is, like the favoured slave in Mrs. Hassan Ali's narrative, "very beautiful;" nay, even simple anger, when roused in the naturally cruel, will lead to more inhuman treatment than can well be described in plain words. It is not more than eight years ago, for instance, since all Calcutta was roused from its tropical torpor into a state of virtuous excitement against a Mohammedan lady. Her slaves, for slaves there are,—in reality, if not in name,—in Calcutta itself,—her slave had not heated her hookah properly with the charcoal burners called *ghools*. She had repeatedly so offended. The lady was very wroth. At length, infuriated by anger, she had the unhappy wretch thrown upon the ground, and held there by other slaves,—by other "servants of the zenanah," the law called them. Whilst thus prostrate, a number of burning *ghools*, properly heated, were thrown over the poor creature, and she was shockingly burnt, so shockingly, that even the indignation of some fellow-slave was roused. The girl died a few

days afterwards. The police were informed of the circumstance. The lady was tried as a purdah-lady, condemned, and sentenced to transportation for life. She was then obliged to show her hitherto-concealed countenance; and the reporters of the newspapers were at a loss to give a proper account of her beauty in words. It was something exquisite.

I am free to confess, however, that I heard of many fewer cases of cruelty in the treatment of slaves during my residence in Lucknow than one would suppose probable, considering my intimacy with the native nobility. Floggings and disgraceful punishments there were for both sexes; but not to any thing like the extent prevalent in America, if Mrs. Stowe's pictures of life in the model republic are to be considered genuine and accurate. Whether it was that I felt an antipathy to the class, or was prejudiced against them by the accounts I heard, I cannot now tell; but my impression is, that the greater part of the cruelty practised in the native harems is to be attributed to the influence and suggestions of the eunuchs. They were usually the inflicters of punishment on the delinquents; and this punishment, whether flogging or torturing, they seemed to in-

flict with a certain degree of *gusto* and appetite for the employment.

These eunuchs, like the female slaves, are to be found in great numbers in the houses of the Mussulman nobility of Lucknow. There could not have been less than a hundred and fifty of them about the palace; and the chief eunuch,—the principal attendant on the first wife of the king, the Padshah* Begum, a daughter of the King of Delhi,—was a man of great influence and importance in Oude. They are usually children stolen for the purpose in Upper India, by those who sell them to the nobles, and are often much in the confidence of the masters whom they serve. "They enjoy many privileges denied to other classes of slaves, and are admitted at all hours and seasons to the zenanahs," says Mrs. Hassan Ali. "They were the usual bath-attendants of the ladies of the harem at court, being preferred for that service to the female slaves."

Many of these unfortunate beings have been advanced to high offices of trust under the Oude government, farming the revenues,

* Mussulman sovereigns take the title of Padshah, or Padishah (protector-ruler). The first wife is therefore the Padshah Begum.

for instance, in large districts, and undertaking the management and conduct of important negotiations. Bishop Heber tells a story of one of them, who, being visited by his sovereign, built him a throne of a million of rupees, —a hundred thousand pounds sterling,—and afterwards made him a present of it.*

As the slave, by Mohammedan law, is the absolute property of his master, all the wealth he may acquire is also his master's; so that whatever sums these eunuchs may accumulate during their lives reverts to their owners on their death. Hence the valuable dresses and jewels heaped upon all classes of slaves, eunuch and other, by their lords. This wealth is but a deposit, lent for the time being to the wearer; for the slave has no heirs, and no legal power to bestow. An instance did once occur, I was told, of a rich eunuch who had long farmed the revenue of a considerable district, and who willed his property away on his death. The appointed heirs lost no time in taking possession of the palace of the deceased eunuch, with all that it contained; but no sooner did the court become aware of the circumstance, than the sovereign

* Narrative, &c. vol. ii.

claimed the entire property as his by right. Troops were marched against the offending heirs; the retainers of the parties in possession fought valiantly in defence; and it was not until after a severe contest that the palace was surrendered to the king. By a slight application of torture, such of the hordes of gold and silver as remained were discovered, and were all seized by the court; in all which the strict letter of the law was but adhered to. Indeed, the people of Oude are so accustomed to contests of this kind, that, like the Tipperary boys, they rather like a good row. It prevents their arms becoming rusty for want of use.

But we have been long enough detained by the exterior of the harem and its attendant sepoys, bearers, and eunuchs. Let us boldly lift the curtain, and pass into the interior to inspect it. The ladies, I am sure, will accompany me.

The form of the buildings of the harem does not greatly differ, I was assured, from that of the accessible parts of the palace. The ordinary oriental model of a house is indeed a square or oblong court-yard, with rooms opening into verandahs surrounding it. If the house con-

sist of two stories, then a gallery runs round the enclosure above, into which the upper rooms open. The apartments are usually raised two or three steps above the level of the court-yard, and consist for the most part of long bare-looking halls, at the end of which small closets are often found, guarded by doors. These closets usually contain valuables of various kinds: dresses, jewellery, expensive ornaments, and such like. It may seem strange to European ears; but doors and windows are usually wanting to these halls, their places being supplied by curtains and apertures. These curtains are called *purdahs*, and hence the common expression in India a *purdah-woman*—that is, one concealed from public gaze—who lives in retirement, seen only by her nearest male relatives, and who travels in shut-up conveyances, often so thickly covered as to prevent the poor prisoner within from seeing any thing without. This restriction as to being seen by the world does not extend, of course, to the female portion of it, only to the male.

If one of these *puraan-women*, Hindu or Mussulman, gives evidence in a Company's court, she remains shut up in her palanquin

even when within the court of justice. A servant, or near relative, swears to the identity of the lady within; and she is *so* examined, never once seen by judge or magistrate, by the accused or the accuser. Seated in her dark box, tailor-fashion, she answers the questions put to her; the voice is heard, but the mouth which utters the voice is not seen. Of course this system leads to great abuse, but it is absurd to blame the Indian Government on that account; native customs require the concealment, and native customs are far less easily interfered with than people may suppose.

The court-yard is much used by the ladies of the harem as a place of reception in fine weather. A temporary cloth covering is often stretched over it, and the ground matted. The chief lady sits on her *musnud*, or throne, in the centre, and there receives her visitors, who salaam as they enter. She rises only to the very aged, or to those of higher rank than herself, or to her male relatives. The lords of the creation are truly lords in the East—too often tyrants too. The ladies regard them as a superior order of beings, listen to their words as the child in Europe listens to its parents, adopt their views and embrace their opinions with an

unhesitating confidence that bespeaks child-like simplicity and implicit faith. Does some indignant Englishwoman mutter "impossible!" or "they pretend only," as she reads this? Let her fancy herself born, brought up, educated, amongst a nation of heathens, who consider the birth of a female child as a positive misfortune, and the birth of a male child as a proportionably great blessing, and she will have no difficulty in believing my words to be literally true, however lamentable she may regard the fact.

The pleasant prospect of nature is, of course, quite shut out from these cheerful, contented captives. They have never enjoyed a glimpse of a pleasing, extensive landscape. Many of them have never even seen a garden or a river, a grove of trees or an open field. "These flowers are beautiful, very beautiful; how pretty must not the ground be where they grow in great numbers!" is an exclamation which a European lady heard from them frequently. "They will often ask with wonder," she remarks again, "'how do these things grow? How do they look in the ground?'"*

When receiving her visitors within the

* Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali's *Observations*, vol. i. p. 333.

halls, the chief lady sits nearly in the centre of the apartment on her musnud or throne, which is placed, if possible, near a pillar. None other is allowed a musnud but her. It consists of a large cushion, covered with gold cloth, or embroidered silk or velvet, and is placed upon a carpet about two yards square. The rank of the lady is usually indicated by the structure and appearance of the carpet and the musnud. In the royal harem, the former was composed of cloth-of-gold, with a deeply embroidered fringe. Two smaller cushions are also placed upon the larger to support the knees, as the lady sits cross-legged.

To be invited to a seat upon the musnud indicates equality in the visitor, or profound respect in the hostess. Should the visitor be of very superior station, or the hostess anxious to show her the highest possible form of respect, she resigns her cushions altogether, which the visitor occupies. A seat even upon the carpet is an honour; how much more, then, the resignation of the musnud itself!

Large lustres and chandeliers were common in the royal harem, although not generally used in the zenanahs in India. They were introduced by Nussir-u-deen. His father,

Ghazi-u-deen, the first king, although fond enough of accumulating such articles of luxury, reserved them all for his own reception-rooms, or for the Emanbarra.

Each of the king's wives had, of course, her own harem, her own musnud, her own reception-rooms and halls. She might not see her husband once in a month,—perhaps not any thing like so often; yet was she still a wife and queen. Perfectly aware though they were, one and all, of course, of the relation in which their female attendants too often stood to his majesty, yet I have been assured that this seldom troubled them. The slave might be the favoured mistress, and the queen the neglected wife; but still each maintained her own station and position within the harem; nor would the king himself have sanctioned any interference with their customary relations.

We had the fullest opportunities of seeing the dresses of the superior order of court-ladies; not on those only who attended his majesty at dinner, and who were always splendidly dressed, being generally young women of great personal attractions. We *could* see them, and *did* see them, of course; but, by a happy royal fiction,

as good as most legal fictions, they were supposed to be *purdah-ladies* still; and to have fixed our eyes upon them would have been considered rude and disrespectful. Not only had we an opportunity of seeing the native female dress of the superior orders on them, I say, but it was a common joke with his majesty, on coming from the bath, to exchange dresses with his favourite wife or mistress for the time being, and to appear before us in that attire; nay, he has done so in the evening, behind the gauze curtain which stretched across the end of the dining-hall, and issued thence dressed as a Begum.

The materials of the dress might vary much, and the method of wearing it slightly; but the articles were always the same, and the form appeared to be stereotyped. The *pyjamas*, or wide trousers, of satin, or cloth-of-gold, or washing-silk, fell loosely over the instep, where they were sometimes gathered and tied, and sometimes extended like a train behind and gathered in front. They were confined by a broad ribbon of gold or silver tissue at the waist, the ends of which hung down before, terminating in rich tassels which reached below the knee. Jewels and pearls were common

ornaments of these tassels. The pyjamas themselves were much fuller below the knee than above,—gradually, indeed, becoming less and less full, until at the waist they fitted, and were evidently intended to fit, closely to the figure.

The bodice, which covered the upper portion of the person, and was worn beneath the other garments, was usually of some thin semi-transparent cloth—gauze, or net, or fine muslin,—the more transparent in texture apparently the more fashionable. It is, in fact, the universal covering of the women of India; and great care is taken to fit it closely to the figure,—a single wrinkle or perceptible seam in it is a defect. Those worn in the royal harem were usually ornamented round the neck with gold bangles or embroidery.

Over the bodice was thrown the *courtee*, or shirt, usually of thread-net. The courtee fell over, but did not conceal, the rich ornaments of the waistband of the pyjamas, and was itself adorned with gold or silver ribbons, used as a trimming upon the seams and hems.

The cloak, called *deputtah*, or *chudder*—thrown over these lighter articles of underclothing, and worn equally within and without

the house—consisted of gold or silver gauze-tissues, and resembled in form nothing so much as a small English bed-sheet, rather long for its breadth. The fine muslins of Dacca are much valued and prized to form these cloaks; and no trouble or expense is spared in embroidering them, and ornamenting them with rich bullion fringes. Thrown over the back part of the head, and falling gracefully on the shoulders, the deputtah, by its arrangement, may be made to give dignity and elegance to a figure in itself wanting in both; whilst, on the naturally dignified and elegant, its folds enhanced, to an extraordinary degree, the grace of the wearer. Standing, it was crossed in front, one end of it falling down over the figure, which it partially screened, whilst the other was thrown over the opposite shoulder; but when the wearer was seated, the deputtah was collected in large folds round the lower part of the figure and upon the lap,—sometimes, indeed, being thrown altogether off the shoulders. This latter, however, was regarded by elderly ladies as arrant coquetry, and as being hardly proper.

Fancy a graceful young woman so clothed, of a brunette tint, with pointed shoes upon her naked feet, which, as well as her hands, are

stained of a rose colour. The large languishing black eyes are made still more captivating by the pencilled line of black drawn on the edges of the eye-lids. The eyebrow has been carefully nurtured and tended, that no stray hair break the regularity of its semicircular sweep. The smooth high forehead and oval countenance are thrown forward prominently by the jet-black glossy hair—smelling of the sweet jessamine oil—which has been taken off the face, and hangs in twisted folds down the back. The ears are ornamented round their edges with a variety of rings, and a large ring hangs from the cartilage of the nose—a large ring, bearing a ruby between two pearls. Fancy such a figure standing before you, in all the elegant gracefulness of unrestrained and unconstrained developments—the upper portion of the form half-hidden, half-revealed by its gauze-like coverings, the lower concealed by the brilliant-coloured pyjamas,—and you have the picture of a fine lady of the court of Oude —the reigning favourite, it may be.

It was not often that the Begums of the court went through Lucknow in formal procession. If a holy place is to be visited, however, or some act of devotion to be performed

at a distant mosque, in the hope of obtaining the greatest of all blessings in their eyes—a male child, the pomp and circumstance with which the lady moves abroad are imposing enough. Before the Padshah Begum alone could the kettle-drums—in Lucknow emblems of sovereignty—be carried. She had the privilege too of the embroidered umbrella, the sun-symbol or aftadah, and the peacock's-feather fans. In other respects, however, the procession was much the same with all.

Let us take a glance at the Padshah Begum and her retinue, as she repairs to the holy Durgah, to pray there. A portion of the king's body-guard, in their flaunting livery of blue and silver, comes first—their band playing and their colours unfurled. Then two battalions of infantry draw near, also with their bands and colours. A company of spearmen, with long silvered spears, succeeds, their white dresses and uniforms contrasting pleasantly with the crimson-jacketed foot-soldiers. A party of men, also with white dresses, comes next in order, each bearing a small triangular crimson flag with the royal arms emblazoned. The covered conveyance in which the lady herself is borne follows the flags; it is, in fact, a small

room, silvered on the outside, and borne along by poles, supported by twenty bearers. Every quarter of a mile these bearers are changed. They are dressed in white cloth fitting close to the person, with loose scarlet overcoats, edged with gold embroidery. Their turbans are also crimson, with a gilt fish in front, from which a gold tassel depends that rests upon the shoulder. The women bearers come next in the order of the procession. Their duty is to relieve the men when the conveyance reaches the palace or the exterior of the Durgah. Gold and silver sticks in waiting follow them in great numbers, loudly vociferating the name and titles of the lady within, and whose duty it is also to keep the beggars at a distance;—for the beggars of Lucknow are an importunate class, not easily daunted by the most resolute refusal; besides, during such a journey, it is customary to scatter coin amongst them, and they congregate in immense numbers to receive it.

Behind the gold and silver sticks rides the chief of the eunuchs upon his elephant,—an officer of considerable authority and importance, as I have already stated. On such occasions he was usually expensively dressed in a suit of gold cloth, a suitable turban, and rich Cash-

mere shawls,—altogether an imposing-looking puppet.

A host of covered conveyances, of all kinds, follow the eunuch, containing the ladies of the Padshah Begum's court. Palanquins, chundoles, and rutts, are the most numerous of this crowd of oddly-shaped vehicles: the palanquins, every one knows now-a-days, are simply large boxes, with doors at the sides, in which the lady reclines; the chundole is of higher quality, loftier and more expensive; whilst the rutt is simply a small waggon, drawn by two bullocks. Soldiers, spearmen, and gold and silver sticks in waiting, accompany this crowd of conveyances in great numbers—the whole number of ladies so borne not being less than from a hundred and fifty to two hundred. You ask, what do they all do? The answer is, they do all sorts of things. Some of them are professed story-tellers, in more senses than one. They lull their mistresses to sleep with tales after the manner of the *Arabian Nights*. Others shampoo well, and are so employed for hours every day. Others sew; for although men generally make the women's clothes in India, yet in the harem they keep female sempstresses. Others read the Koran—the blue-stockings of the

harem. Others, again, are a kind of superior slaves, doing the domestic work of the harem; but yet not to be exposed to the gaze of man, however menially employed.

So attended, with such crowds of followers and noise-makers, of both sexes and none, goes the Padshah Begum along on her way to the house of prayer; she, you may depend upon it, thinking no little of her own greatness, and of the noise her greatness makes in the world. Let her fade away from our mental vision then, if not with peace, at least with kindly wishes; for she is, after all, to be pitied, rich gilded slave. The poorest shopkeeper's wife in England, that has an honest husband and a home of her own, is more to be respected, and is a happier woman, than the Padshah Begum of Oude with all her glitter.

CHAPTER X.

DUELLO—PARTRIDGES TO TIGERS.

Partridges and quails trained for fighting—After-dinner sports—Antelopes—The encounter—Its usual termination—Tigers—*Kagra* and the *Terai-wallah*—The court in the balcony—The struggle beneath—The death-grapple—Victory.

One of the most common amusements of the court of Oude was the fighting of birds and wild animals, trained for the most part for that purpose. Cock-partridges, skilfully spurred, would peck and wrestle with a pertinacity strange to see, and which much delighted his majesty. On such occasions, usually after dinner, the table was cleared, and the combatants, duly prepared by stimulating drugs, were ushered into "the presence." The king, seated in his gilt arm-chair in the centre of one side of the table, slightly raised above the level of the other chairs, would give the order to the attending servants, and the sport would

begin. The two cocks, placed upon the table, surveyed us all leisurely in succession, wondering, doubtless, what they were there for. A crow or two, shrill and yet sonorous, would be uttered and answered; but no sign of hostility. At length a hen would be placed on the table between them, exactly opposite his majesty. With leisurely step they would advance from either side to make acquaintance with the newcomer, in a solemn dignified way, just like a Turk entering a mosque or a harem.

As they each saw the other likewise advancing, evidences of hostility would appear in their gait and attitude. A feather started here, a neck protruded there, a defiant crow, answered by a more defiant chuckle,—the hen remaining a patient spectator of the scene,—until a final rush was made. She, flying off as quietly as possible, leaves the two lords of partridge creation to settle the dispute between them; and they, with standing feathers, and erect combs and protruded beak, are in a moment hard at work. Nothing can be more scientific than the sparring which follows; each watching his adversary intently, as the half-expanded wings twitch with rage or excitement, and the spurred legs are hastily raised

and depressed in succession, as if eager for the fray—each moving cautiously round, making feigned assaults and as feigned retreats—each red with eager desire of glory, and anxious to dip his beak in the blood of his foe. All around, human faces, gazing intently, watch the combat, and applaud now one, now the other warrior, as the battle proceeds; the king the most excited of all.

At length, with a simultaneous bound, the two little heroes meet each other in the air a few inches above the table; the spurs are plunged into the thighs or sides of the enemy, and the bills make savage dashes at his eyes. Blood flows, a few tiny specks here and there; but still sufficient to show that it has been no sham assault, no harmless passage of arms without aim or purpose. The gazers salute the conqueror of the moment as he stands on the battle-field elate, and proclaims his own prowess with a triumphant chuckle. But there is no time to be lost. The foe is advancing again. He is not a whit intimidated by the drops of blood he has lost, his torn thigh, or his ripped-up side. No, he will to the work again, with right good-will and in fearless earnest.

Another jump, and again the spurs are struck, and again the beaks snap at the eyes madly. The victor of a moment before has lost his advantage, and retires a few paces with one eye torn from its socket and dangling by a tendon on his cheek. It is cruel sport truly; but we round the table are too much accustomed to it to think much of that, and again the room rings with shouts of laughter and uproarious encouragement to the poor little warrior that has lost his eye. He wants no encouragement, however. In a moment the fight has been renewed, if possible with more savage fierceness than ever; and not till one of the combatants drops dead upon the table, or dying from loss of blood, is it concluded,—the victor often without an eye, and left a cripple for life; fortunate indeed if he retain the use of one leg. So that the conqueror is often carried off by the admiring servants, to be petted for his prowess, and to die.

The wine circulates again at the table, which has been wiped clean; the king is in great vein, and insists upon every one taking snuff with him, which all pretend to do. The female attendants blow up the fire in his hookah, which is placed on the floor behind

him, and he puffs and puffs again in joyous exhilaration, laughing all the while at the clever little devil that picked out his adversary's eye so neatly, and then got ripped-up in return. It was very laughable!

"But we must have some more," exclaims hilarious majesty; and the attendants hasten to inquire whether the anointed of the Company will have quails now, or partridges again, or crows, or common cocks. He makes his choice, and the sport proceeds anew, ever becoming more noisy and uproarious as the wine circulates the more; until his majesty can give no more orders, and the revel is at an end.

A beautiful description of antelope, small and delicately formed, is caught at the base of the Himalayas in great numbers, and is trained at Lucknow to fight. These fights, however, usually took place in one of the palace-gardens, or in an enclosure prepared for the purpose; the king being seated in a balcony or gallery to witness the contest, and his courtiers around and about him. Nothing could be more graceful than the half-trotting gait at which the two horned heroes approached each other, their branching antlers dancing in the air as they did so; and then, to see the skilful manœuvring

of the pair to gain some little advantage of position or station previous to coming to close quarters! It was beautiful to see, and pitiful that all this grace and elegance should be displayed in such a cause.

Crossing their antlers, and sparring with them vigorously, the two warriors now advanced, now retreated, as they gained or lost some little advantage. At length, after much twining and intertwining, after much manœuvring and cautious setting to each other, the antlers were locked finally together; and then came the eager straining of every muscle and every tendon, the anxious trial of strength, which often ended in the death of one or the other. With hind-quarters well braced up for a vigorous shove, head lowered, and feet firmly fixed against the ground, would the two combatants push and resist, and push again pertinaciously.

One gains a little advantage at one moment, and drives his adversary a few paces back, only to lose it at another, and to be driven back in his turn. And yet, with every muscle strung to its utmost tension, with every vein swelling in the eager desire for victory, not a leg was raised that was not gracefully set down again,

not a movement that did not indicate elegant proportion, harmonious adaptation of part to part, and of limb to limb.

At length the strength of one of the combatants has yielded under the long-continued exertion; the rolling eyes begin to indicate terror in their fiery distention; the legs are raised and depressed with nervous twitching, as the weaker party is gradually forced back, without a hope of regaining the advantage lost. The stronger pushes his adversary all the more fiercely at these symptoms of failing vigour. The hope that has been oozing from the breast of the weaker, inspires the stronger, and makes him all the more determined.

Great is the excitement in the gallery containing the king and his courtiers as this crisis of the struggle is attained. Great the straining of eyes and the stretching of necks to watch the *finale*—the king again the most excited and eager of all.

"He is yielding fast; he is yielding fast," shouts his majesty; "the dark one has the advantage."

There could not be a doubt of the fact. Ever onwards and onwards pushes the dark antelope, the head still more depressed than

before, every muscle starting, every limb dancing with animation; whilst, on the other side, his yielding adversary rolls his eyes about more wildly than ever. He is becoming paralysed with terror. His graceful limbs twitch with fear and uncontrollable emotion as he still yields ground. At length he has reached the limit of the enclosure; his hind-quarters are fixed against the bamboo railing. He can go back no further; and still the remorseless enemy pushes on even more fiercely.

"Now for the sport," exclaims an eager spectator in the gallery, rubbing his hands as he sees the disheartened antelope pinned between the bamboo railing on one side and the pushing antagonist on the other. "Now for the sport,"—and king and courtiers chuckle over the display.

The weaker antelope, as he still maintains the unequal contest, trembling as he is, hears the exclamation, and rolls his eyes as well as he can helplessly upwards: he does not know but help may come, somehow, from that quarter. The strength which has borne him up hitherto now begins to fail; the quivering limbs totter as the antagonist, lowering his head still more, pushes with renewed vigour; the muscles

are suddenly relaxed, and he turns sideways from his opponent, as if to escape by flight. In a moment the antlers are unlocked, and the sharp points of those borne by the victor are plunged into the flanks of the vanquished. The head of the poor animal thus gored is tossed wildly up; and he groans with pain as he sinks on one knee, big tears coursing each other down his cheeks.

But life is sweet; and with a vigorous effort he tears himself away from his dangerous position, wrenching the head of the victor to the side as he does so. Like an arrow he is off, winging his way with the speed of the wind round the enclosure, looking for some means of escape.

The excitement in the gallery is still greater than it was; there is to be more sport, and the king encourages the fugitive with a hearty "*shavash!*" (bravo!)

An antelope flying for life runs swiftly—the eye feels a difficulty in following him distinctly. The fugitive looks eagerly for some means of escape; but there is none: and as he courses round, with almost incredible speed, his flanks bearing bloody tokens of his defeat, his adversary collects himself for a new plunge.

The head is again depressed almost until the mouth touches the knees; the antlers, tipped with blood, are directed in an oblique line against the side of the fleeing foe; and, watching his opportunity, he rushes forcibly against the fugitive. He has "pinned" his antagonist again, skilful warrior that he is; the antlers are thrust far into the steaming side—the foe falls dying, or dead perhaps; and the victor, shaking off the carcass from his horns, raises his head and triumphs.

But why talk of the struggles of insignificant antelopes, graceful though they be, when there is the contest of the more savage tiger, the unwieldy rhinoceros, or the gigantic elephant to describe? The partridges, the quails, the crows, the cocks, the trained rams and antelopes, are but the child's play of these exhibitions; two tigers tearing each other, two rhinoceroses ripping each other up with their knife-like horns, two elephants in a death-struggle, are the serious acts of these tragic comedies, or comic tragedies, or simple tragedies, if the benevolent reader will have it so, —the others being merely the unimportant by-play, the lighter and the more trifling incidents.

When the two tigers, properly prepared for the contest by being kept without food and water for some days previously, were introduced into the strongly-railed and barricaded enclosure, a pin dropping in the court-yard might almost have been heard. Expectation stood on tiptoe to know what would be the result.

There was a famous tiger—a monster of a tiger—named *Kagra*, who had triumphed at Lucknow on several occasions. He was certainly one of the largest I have ever seen; and beautifully streaked was his glossy coat, as it moved freely over his muscular limbs and long back. The connoisseurs in sport had despaired of finding a fitting adversary for Kagra, when news arrived that a tiger of enormous size and strength had been taken uninjured in the Terai—the long strip of jungle-land between Oude and Nepaul, just at the foot of the Himalayas. It was anticipated that there would be glorious sport when this new monster was brought face to face with the redoubted Kagra.

The stranger—the *Terai-wallah* as he was called—was taken especial care of; and it was on the occasion of the visit of the commander-in-chief of the Anglo-Indian army to the King

of Oude that the contest was to take place. More than ordinary pains were taken to render the spectacle imposing. The court-yard in which the battle was to be fought was richly decorated with leaves and flowers, with all that brilliancy of colouring and taste in its distribution for which the natives of India are so deservedly famous. The gallery to receive the king and his court, the commander-in-chief and his staff, was elaborately ornamented with gilding and flags. The royal canopy—umbrella-shaped—of crimson and gold tissue, was raised above the state-chair; whilst similar seats of honour were prepared on either hand for the commander-in-chief and the resident. The king wore his crown on the occasion; it was a new one, only lately made, with an elaborate display of jewellery, and a beautiful heron's plume of snowy whiteness bending gracefully over it. He could act with dignity when he liked; and the contrast between the rich, though softened, umber colour of his countenance, and the glittering jewels, and the delicate plume, was very imposing and pleasing to look upon. He wore on this occasion his oriental dress, formed of the glittering kincobs of China—silk of gold-like and silver-like appearance, glancing with

every movement like burnished jewellery. It was a spectacle not easily forgotten. Such a scene will live robustly in the memory when a thousand more important events have faded into forgetfulness. The commander-in-chief wore his general's uniform; the resident was dressed in plain clothes.

The cages of Kagra and Terai-wallah were brought to opposite sides of the court-yard, both commanded by our position in the gallery. We could see the long shining backs of the tigers as they roamed round their cages in great excitement; occasionally there was a snarl and a display of teeth alarming to witness, as some attendant approached the cages. It was intended that the animals should become aware of the presence of each other, and hence the previous delay; for, ferocious as the tiger is, he is a cowardly animal, and, if brought unexpectedly into the presence of danger, may cower and retreat from the contest. I have seen two of them, properly prepared, that is, both hungry and thirsty, when bounding into the enclosure, and ignorant that another tiger was in the vicinity, do their utmost to get back into their cages, and, failing that, slink away to a corner, crouch down there upon their bellies,

and watch each other intently, indisposed to hostility.

It was evident that Kagra and the Terai-wallah were soon aware of each other's vicinity; for as they prowled round, they would stand and growl and show their teeth at the opposite cage in an eminently tiger-like manner. The commander-in-chief and the resident had inspected both of them previously.

"On which of them will your excellency bet?" asked the king, as he saw the commander-in-chief watching them intently.

"Your majesty will perhaps pardon me," said the general. The Company were wroth with the king because his territory was in so much confusion and disorder, so the commander-in-chief would *not* bet with him.

"A hundred gold mohurs* on Kagra," said the king, turning to the resident.

"Done, your majesty; I think the Terai-wallah is the more likely to succeed," was the resident's answer.

The king rubbed his hands with glee. He was now beginning to enjoy the situation.

"Will you bet on the Terai-wallah?" he

* About 160*l.*

asked his prime-minister eagerly in Hindustani.

"My lord the resident is always right; I will, sire," was the prime-minister's reply—prime-minister in name only, it must be remembered, but a man of great wealth; the European barber then standing among the king's suite was the real prime-minister.

"A hundred gold mohurs, then, on Kagra," said his majesty.

The prime-minister accepted the bet, and took out a very elegant little tablet from his belted Cashmere shawl to make a note of the transaction. Not that he intended to remind his majesty of it, had his majesty chosen to forget; but in case majesty should say he had bet on Kagra, he would be able to show the entry made at the time, and express timidly a doubt whether "the refuge of the world" might not have been correct and he wrong. Aye, and he would pay his hundred gold mohurs too, if "the refuge of the world" insisted that he *had* bet on the Terai-wallah; pay it smilingly, and then repay himself by squeezing a little harder than usual—only a *little*—the next rich delinquent that passed through his hands.

The signal was given—the bamboo railing

in front of the cages rose simultaneously on either side—the doors of the cages opened. Terai-wallah sprang with a single bound out of his cage, opening his huge jaws widely, and shaking from side to side his long tail in an excited way. Kagra advanced more leisurely into the arena, but with similar demonstrations. They might have been fifty feet apart, as they stood surveying each other, open-mouthed, the tails playing all the time.

At length Kagra advanced a few paces; his adversary laid himself down forthwith upon the court-yard, just where he stood, facing him, but with his feet well under him, not extended, evidently quite prepared for a spring. Kagra watched his foe intently, and still advanced slowly and cautiously, but not in a straight line, rather towards the side, describing an arc of a circle as he drew near.

The Terai-wallah soon rose to his feet and likewise advanced, describing a similar arc on the opposite side, both gradually approaching each other, however. It was a moment of breathless suspense in the gallery. Every eye was fixed on the two combatants as they thus tried to circumvent each other; it was enough to arrest the attention, for the tigers were

unusually large; both were in beautiful condition, plump and muscular; the colour of the Terai-wallah was somewhat lighter than that of Kagra, a more yellowish hue shone between the black stripes. Both were very beautiful, and very courageous, and very formidable.

At length, as they thus advanced, step by step, very slowly, Kagra made a spring. His former victories had probably made him a little self-confident. He sprang, not as if it were a voluntary effort of his own, but as if he were suddenly impelled aloft by some uncontrollable galvanic force which he could not resist. The spring was so sudden, so rapid, so impetuous, that it had quite the appearance of being involuntary. The Terai-wallah was not unprepared. As rapidly as Kagra had hurled himself up into the air, so rapidly did he jump aside; both movements seemed to be simultaneous, so admirably were they executed. Kagra alighted, foiled; but before he could recover himself, before he could have well assured himself that he *was* foiled, the Terai-wallah was upon him. The claws of his adversary were fixed firmly in his neck, and the horrid jaws were already grating near his throat. It was the work of a moment. We

could scarcely see that the Terai-wallah had gained the advantage—we could scarcely distinguish his huge fore-paws grasping the neck, and his open mouth plunged at the throat—when Kagra made another spring, a bound in which he evidently concentrated all his energy. The Terai-wallah was dragged with him for a little; the claws that had been dug into his neck were torn gratingly through it; the open mouth snapped fiercely but harmlessly at the advancing shoulder, and Kagra was free. His neck and shoulder, however, bore bloody traces of the injury he had received; and no sooner did he feel that he had got rid of his assailant than he turned with greater fierceness than ever to assail his foe.

"Shavash! Kagra—bravo! I'll make it two hundred gold mohurs," said the king, turning to his prime-minister.

"The asylum of the world commands it—two hundred let it be," replied Rooshun, as he took out his tablets anew.

But the interest of the contest in the arena was too intense to admit of our attention being withdrawn from it. It was but for an instant that the two tigers stood surveying each other, open-mouthed, after Kagra had shaken off the

grip of his antagonist. With distended jaws, the ample mouths opened to their utmost limit, their beautifully-streaked skins starting from their forms in excitement, their eyes distended as they watched each other, the ends of the tails moving once or twice, as if with convulsive twitches, they stood. Kagra was the first to attack again. This time his opponent was too near to try his former stratagem of slipping to one side. He met him boldly. They stood at that moment near the centre of the arena; and, as the sharp claws moved incessantly, and the huge mouths tried to grasp the neck on either side, it was impossible to distinguish the attack from the defence; all was so rapid.

Drawing gradually nearer as they thus fought with claws and mouths ferociously, uttering fierce snarls as they did so, both seemed to have succeeded in gripping their antagonist. With their mouths buried in each other's throats, and their claws dug deeply into the neck, they rose at length to the contest on their hind legs—straining and tugging, and wrestling, as it were, with each other, each with his utmost force and skill. It was a spectacle of startling interest, that; and how-

ever you may turn away, good madam, and exclaim horrible! or savage! believe me there were many elements of the sublime in that contest; and doubtless such contests often take place in the jungle.

They stood more than six feet high as they thus grappled with each other, elevated on their hind legs, in a sort of death-struggle; their round heads and glaring eyes surmounting the muscular pillars of their long bodies beautifully. It was wonderful to see how firmly the claws were fixed into the neck on both sides. There was no shifting of position, no further grasping either with claw or mouth. It was now a contest of life or death. Both were bleeding freely, and it would chiefly depend upon strength as to which should be thrown under the other, and thereby probably lose his hold.

These things take long to describe, but they occurred very rapidly. There was deep silence in the arena and in the gallery, as the two wild beasts thus stood confronting each other on their hind legs—deep silence and earnest gazing on all sides and from all quarters; even the very breathing was suspended in many as they watched the contest. Not

for long, however, as I have said. Kagra, more skilful or more impetuous than his antagonist, overthrew him at length, and the two rolled over on the arena; the Terai-wallah on his back beneath, Kagra above.

"Shavash, Kagra!" uttered the king again, well pleased. "Kagra has the advantage," muttered more than one voice in English.

But the advantage was only momentary. The hind claws of Kagra were being plunged into the belly of his foe, when the Terai-wallah, who never let go his hold for a moment with his mouth, struck one of his fore-paws over the face of his antagonist. His claws evidently pierced Kagra's eyes; one of them was torn from its socket; and uttering a howl of pain or despair, the mutilated beast relinquished his grip, and would have torn himself from his antagonist. This, however, he was not permitted to do. The Terai-wallah clung pertinaciously to his throat. His teeth were deeply infixed. He was dragged for a few paces over the arena by Kagra, who tried to release himself in vain; and then, all at once leaping from his prostrate position, the Terai-wallah hurled himself on the top of his assailant.

The contest was virtually at an end. Kagra, now fallen beneath his foe, and fast losing blood, was incapable of regaining the advantage he had lost. The Terai-wallah, thrusting one paw under his lower jaw, forced back the head further until he infixed his teeth still more deeply into the throat. Kagra did battle ineffectually with his claws, tearing the skin of his antagonist here and there; but he had lost the hold he had obtained with his mouth, and was evidently fast sinking under the victor's grasp and bite.

"Kagra is beaten," was uttered in Hindustani and English in the gallery above.

"He is," said the king, as he gave orders to the servants below to open Kagra's cage, and drive off the Terai-wallah.

Red-hot rods were thrust through the bars of the enclosure, and the successful tiger was cruelly burnt before he would relinquish his hold. It was the most barbarous part of the exhibition; and yet it was the only way to save the life of Kagra. At length the Terai-wallah was driven off, his jaws dropping blood as he went. Kagra's cage was opened, and he made for it immediately, with all the marks of the conquered about him; he left his track on

the arena in blood-stains, whilst his tail hung flaccidly between his legs; yet, though he was flying, he fled stealthily, as it were, not vigorously and upright as a horse would have fled, but with stealthy, creeping, cat-like agility. The red-hot rods were held before the Terai-wallah to prevent him from pursuing. He still faced towards, and glared after, his beaten foe; and ere Kagra had reached his cage, he sprang high above the rods to attack the flying tiger once more. He fell short of his victim, however. Kagra quickened his steps, reached the cage, and buried himself in its furthest corner, cowering like a whipped cur.

As for the Terai-wallah, he watched his defeated antagonist steadily to the last, never once taking his eyes off him; and then, shaking himself two or three times, he licked his paws, rose majestically from his crouching posture, and walked deliberately towards his own cage, which was open to receive him; his torn shoulders, and the large drops of blood which fell from him as he walked, proclaiming how dearly he had won his victory.

CHAPTER XI.

DUELLO—THE RHINOCEROS AND ELEPHANT.

Fighting camels—The rhinoceros—His peaceful nature—His manner of fighting—The rhinoceros and the elephant—The rhinoceros and the tiger—The fighting elephants—*Malleer*—The struggle—Fall of the mahout—His death—The elephant's remorse—Another fight—Danger and escape.

I HAVE already described the ordinary fights of birds, antelopes, and tigers. I now turn to the larger animals. Nothing more brutal than the contests of camels can well be conceived. They are trained to fighting with each other in Lucknow; but nature intended them to be useful, peaceful animals, not warlike; and when man, endeavouring to change their nature, insists upon their being warlike for his gratification, the sight is odious. It is well known that, like the lama of Peru, the camel discharges a fluid from its throat at its adver-

sary. I have seen those trained to fight bring up one of their stomachs in the energy of their spitting! A horrible sight! Nor was it more pleasant to see one grasp the long lip of the other between his teeth, and drag it off in a brutal way. Such fights end only in lacerating the head and injuring the eyes, the huge bodies remaining untouched.

Naturally, the rhinoceros is also a peaceful animal. Bishop Heber says, that in Ghazi-u-deen's reign the rhinoceros was used in a carriage, and to carry a howdah. I have never seen him so employed. Although peaceful, however, he is better fitted by nature for warfare than the poor camel. His knife-like horn, his skin more impenetrable than a coat of mail, his compact body and huge muscular limbs, all render him a fearful antagonist to the largest animals. When roused, he will soon make away, I doubt not, with a hippopotamus, and is a match for an elephant.

The extent to which these various animals were kept at Lucknow for purposes of "sport" may be conceived, from the fact of the royal menagerie having contained, when I served the King of Oude, from fifteen to twenty rhinoceroses. They were kept in the open

park around *Chaun-gunge,* and were allowed to roam about, at large, within certain limits.

It was usually at this palace, Chaun-gunge, and sometimes at another called Mobarrack Munzul, that the fights of the larger animals took place, generally in an enclosure made for the purpose, over one side of which a balcony had been built for the king and his attendants, not unlike a portico in front of a house to receive carriages — structures far more common in Calcutta than in London. Sometimes, however, the fights took place in the open park, where galleries had been erected on substantial pillars. The two rhinoceroses, males,—always more ready to engage in combat at particular seasons than at other times, just as the elephants are,—were duly prepared by stimulating drugs, and let into the enclosure from opposite sides, or were driven in the park towards each other by active fellows on horseback with long spears. The first sight of the antagonist was generally enough to cause each to be ready to attack; for they know at once, by their keen sense of smell, whether a male or female is in their vicinity. Rushing against each other, with heads somewhat lowered, they met angrily in the midst,

thrusting forward their armed snouts in a hog-like way.

So thick are their hides on the back and legs, that even the short knife-like horn of the snout can make no impression upon it. In the more tender skin of the belly alone, or between the legs, can injury be done. The object of each, then, in closing is to introduce his snout between the fore-legs of his antagonist, and so rip him up; a process which the slight curve of the horn backwards renders comparatively an easy one, if the required position be attained.

But as both equally seek the same advantage, their heads and snouts in the first instance meet in the midst. They strike each other, they push, they lower their heads, they grunt valorously, displaying an amount of activity and energy that one would conceive it almost impossible for them to exercise with their unwieldy forms. The snouts rattle against each other as they mutually strike; the horns may come into contact too, and the sound which is produced plainly tells that it is with no child's play that they are thus crossed. At length, in some way or other, they appear to be locked together, horn to horn, snout to

snout, head to head—the heads always down defending the chest and the entrance between the fore-legs. Then commences a hard struggle,—a firm continuous pushing with all their might. Each throws the whole weight of his huge form into the scale, and with that the enormous strength with which nature has endowed him. They push, and push, and push again with obstinate perseverance. The weaker must ultimately lose ground. He is driven back, at first slowly, step by step, then more rapidly, in a sort of backward trot; the stronger and sturdier pursuing his advantage with implacable ferocity. At length the weaker, finding that he can no longer make head, makes a desperate plunge backwards to release his snout and horns. It is the decisive moment of the combat. I have seen it end very variously. If in an enclosure, and the weaker has no room to withdraw himself, he is almost sure to be ripped up by the impetuous assailant, and to fall very severely wounded or dead; his adversary being driven off by hot irons thrust under him, and spears. In the open park, however, the weaker, if active, sometimes succeeded in detaching himself, and scampering off as fast as possible with-

out receiving any severe hurt. The stronger pursued with hearty good will, and they were soon out of sight. In such cases, all would depend upon the nature of the ground, and the relative activity of the two. If the flying combatant was overtaken by his pursuer, nothing could save his life, for a gaping wound, a foot deep, would soon be made in his chest. On one occasion, however, and on only one, I saw a very different termination of the contest to that which was expected.

The weaker had been gradually retreating, at first slowly, afterwards more rapidly. It was in the open park. At length he made a plunge backwards to release himself, and succeeded. The stronger brute, evidently somewhat pig-headed, surprised at the action, thrust his snout upwards in an astonished way; his more active enemy saw the movement at once, and, though evidently preparing to fly, checked himself, lowered his head, and had his snout introduced between his enemy's forelegs in an instant. The stream of blood which flowed from the wounded combatant, and his quick snort of pain, proclaimed the victory of him who, up to this moment, had been losing

ground, and hope perhaps. The wounded rhinoceros now turned to fly, losing blood rapidly, and his intestines partially protruding from the wound. His adversary allowed him to turn and run a few paces; and then burying his snout again between his hind legs, gored him severely. He fell in a frightfully mangled way, and the active horsemen with their long spears drove off the assailant—no easy matter. Whether the wounded rhinoceros died or not, I do not know. I probably heard at the time and have forgotten. So skilful are the native leeches, however, in attending these monsters, that I should not at all wonder if he recovered.

The contest between a rhinoceros and an elephant is not nearly so interesting as that between the rhinoceros and the tiger. In the former case it is not easy, in the first place, to make the two animals attack each other, even though the elephant be *must*, and the rhinoceros in a similar condition. Should they take a fancy, however, to try each other's mettle, the elephant approaches as usual, with his trunk thrown up into the air and head protruded; the rhinoceros either standing upon

his guard, or also advancing with lowered snout. The tusks of the elephant sometimes pass on each side of the rhinoceros harmlessly, whilst the huge head shoves the lighter animal backwards. If the elephant's tusks trip up the rhinoceros, as is sometimes the case, they are then plunged into him without mercy; but more frequently the contest ends to the disadvantage of the elephant, by the rhinoceros inserting his snout between his antagonist's fore-legs and partially ripping him up; the elephant belabouring all the time with his trunk, to a certain extent uselessly, however. Prevented by his tusks, the rhinoceros cannot get his snout far under the elephant's body, so that the wound he inflicts is not generally a very severe one.

Between the rhinoceros and the tiger, however, the contest is one of infinitely more animation and excitement. The steady guard of the larger animal, and the stealthy, cat-like attack of the smaller—the lowered snout of the one and the gleaming teeth of the other—the cocked horn, kept valorously in an attitude of defiant guard, and the bullet head, with its gleaming eyes, together with the brawny claws—were all things to be watched

and to interest. The rhinoceros, however, is secure from attack on his back, and when the tiger springs, his claws get no hold in the plate-like covering of his antagonist. Should the rhinoceros be overthrown by the tiger's weight, then the fate of the former is sealed; he is ripped and torn up and gnawed from beneath, as a tiger only can rip, and tear up, and gnaw; I have heard of such results following the tiger's assault, but have never witnessed such.

In nine cases out of ten the rhinoceros gains the advantage; the tiger springs, and springs, and springs again, still baffled by the voluminous armour-like skin of his antagonist, until, at some moment or other, the rhinoceros seizes his opportunity, and succeeds in inflicting a severe wound with his formidable horn. The tiger then declines the combat, and easily escapes its unwieldy enemy, should the rhinoceros take it into his head to attack.

There is no other animal, perhaps, so utterly impervious to attack as the rhinoceros; there is certainly none other that takes all attacks with such perfect coolness and self-possession. Shut up in a comparatively small enclosure with a ferocious tiger, he seems to

be not in the least disconcerted—not even to find his situation uncomfortable—but, with wonderful phlegmatic ease, stands prepared for all contingencies. His coat of armour is, of course, his chief defence; but the shape of his head contributes much to his safety. It curves inwards from the snout to the forehead; so that the eyes are deeply sunk and securely wedged into a concave bone where they cannot be easily assailed—the short pointed horn forming an additional defence to them, and one of the most formidable weapons of offence too, possessed by any animal, when the strength of the rhinoceros is considered. There is something surprising, notwithstanding all this, in seeing this pig-like animal withstanding or conquering the largest tigers and elephants. I have never seen the rhinoceros pitted against the lion. The king of Oude had but three or four lions, and he reserved them for very special occasions—but a contest between the two would but be similar, I doubt not, to that between the rhinoceros and the tiger. Indeed the lion fights so exactly like the tiger, that a contest between two lions is precisely similar to that between two tigers. There was no lion in Lucknow a

match for the largest tigers there: doubtless the few found at the foot of the Himalayas, and in Asia generally, are not equal to those of Africa; but I very much doubt whether the Bengal tiger is not the more formidable animal of the two. I have never seen any lions in London or Paris equal in size to the largest tigers.

Of the hundred and fifty elephants possessed by the King of Oude, there was one with one broken tusk, that had been victor in a hundred fights. His name was *Malleer;* and he was a great favourite with the king. His tusk had been broken off bit by bit in several encounters; the elephants rushing against each other with such force as sometimes to snap off a portion, or the whole of a tusk. Malleer had lost his, as I have said, gradually. He was a formidable black fellow, very terrible when in that excited state called *must.* During the visit of the commander-in-chief it was determined that a fitting antagonist should be found for Malleer, and that he should once more make his appearance on the stage as a gladiator. It was fortunately the proper season. Malleer was *must;* and another gigantic elephant, also

black, and of course in a similar state, was selected to be his antagonist.

When in this excited state, two male elephants have but to see each other to commence the combat forthwith; there is no incitement required. Each has his own keeper, or *mahout** as he is called, seated on his neck —the only person who can safely approach the animal at such a season. In the mahout's hands, however, even then the monster is generally docile as a child.

There is no preparation required for the combat but the passing of a secure string from the neck of the elephant to his tail—a string by which the mahout holds on and retains his position during the combat. It may be easily supposed that the poor man's position is by no means a comfortable one during such a contest; but so jealous is each of the good fame of his beast, that he would rather have his own selected for such sport than be excused. It is an honour paid to him, as well as to the gigantic combatant whom he guides. Should he be thrown, the elephant opposed to him would certainly destroy him if he got an opportunity. He therefore clings to the string

* Pronounced *ma-howth*.

with all the tenacity of a man grasping a plank after a shipwreck.

On the occasion on which Malleer's services were required for the amusement of the British commander-in-chief, and the king and court of Oude, we were in one of the king's palaces, situated on the banks of the Goomty. A terrace built on the water-side overlooked the river. An open park was on the opposite side of the stream; and on that bank it was resolved the contest should take place, we inspecting it from the balcony. The Goomty at this place was not wider than Regent Street in London, and the terrace projected over the water; so that we were quite near enough to see the encounter well. The opposite bank was covered with grass; there was nothing to impede the vision for a considerable distance.

At a signal given by the king, the two elephants advanced from opposite sides, each with his mahout on his neck; Malleer, with his one tusk, looking by no means so formidable as the huge black antagonist whom he was to fight, and who was well furnished with ivory. The moment they caught sight of each other, the two elephants, as if with an instinctive perception of what was expected of them, put their

trunks and tails aloft, and shuffled up to each other with considerable speed, after their unwieldy fashion, trumpeting out loudly mutual defiance. This is the ordinary attitude of attack of the elephant. He puts his trunk up perpendicularly, in order that it may be out of harm's way. His tail is similarly raised from excitement. His trumpeting consists of a series of quick blasts, between roars and grunting.

Malleer and his foe rushed at each other impetuously. The sound of their huge heads coming into violent collision might have been heard at the distance of half a mile. This may sound like an exaggeration. It is not so. When the reader only thinks of the bulk of the elephant, the great weight, the momentum acquired by the rapid motion, and then the concussion of two such bodies coming full-tilt against each other, he will not be surprised at it. More than once, on such occasions, have I seen the tusks snapping short off, and thrown up into the air with the terrible force of the collision.

The first blow struck, both elephants now set themselves vigorously to push against each other with their broad foreheads. Head to head, both trunks still elevated into the air

perpendicularly, their tusks interlaced, their feet set firmly in massive solidity upon the ground, did they push and push, and shove and shove, not with one resolute long-continued effort, but with repeated short strokes of the unwieldy forms. The heads were not separated for a moment; but the backs were curving slightly and then becoming straight again in regular succession, as each shove and push was administered. The mahouts, seated on the neck, were not idle the while. They shouted, encouraging each his own warrior, with hearty good-will, almost with frantic energy, using the iron prod, employed in driving them, freely upon the skull. It was a spectacle to make one hold in the breath with earnest gazing,—a spectacle to make the blood come fast and thumping through the veins,—as the two huge combatants pushed and shoved with all their might vehemently, and as the two mahouts exerted all their powers to encourage them.

It is evident in such a contest, as generally happens with these wild animals, that the stronger combatant gains the victory. Instances *do* occur in which superior agility causes the weaker to bear off the honours of success; but such instances are rare—in the

case of two opposing elephants rarer, perhaps, than with other animals. But what is the end of this pushing? you ask. If the stronger succeed in overthrowing his adversary, the death of the vanquished is the probable result. This sometimes occurs when great violence is used, and the weaker can hardly retreat quick enough. He loses hope and strength together, turns awkwardly to fly, is pushed as he turns, and falls. The end is then soon seen. The victor plunges his tusks without mercy into the side of his foe, as he lies helplessly on the ground, and death follows. If the weaker, by great agility, succeed in turning and running away, a chase is the result, which ends either in the escape of the fugitive, or in his being sorely belaboured by the trunk and galled by the tusks of his antagonist.

But Malleer and his foe are shoving heartily all this time, whilst I am discoursing of other things,—ay, and the king of Oude, the British commander-in-chief, and the resident, are gazing intently on them from the balcony as they *so* shove; gazing intently, so that the balcony is absolutely without noise or sound.

At length the redoubted Malleer, one-tusked though he was, began to gain the advan-

tage. The fore leg of his antagonist was raised as if uncertainly, one could not tell whether to advance or retreat, as he still stoutly shoved with all his might. But it was evident very soon that it was not to advance, but to retreat, that the leg was *so* raised. It had hardly been set down again, when the other was similarly raised and lowered. The mahout of Malleer saw the movement, and knew well what it indicated. He shouted more frantically than ever—almost demoniacally, in fact—striking the skull with his iron prong in a wild excited way. But Malleer needed no encouragement. He was too old a warrior not to feel that another victory was about being added to his laurels, and his strength seemed increased by the conviction. He and his mahout together became more and more excited every instant.

At this time they were only a few yards from the bank of the Goomty, a little to the left of our balcony. The retreating elephant gave way step by step, slowly, drawing nearer to the river as he did so. At length, with a sudden leap backwards, he tore himself from his antagonist, and threw his vast carcass down the bank into the river. His mahout clung

to the rope over his back, and was soon seen safe and sound on his neck, whilst the elephant swam off to gain the opposite bank. Malleer was furious at this escape of his antagonist. His mahout wanted him to follow; but he knew that it was vain, or he was too savage to obey. He glared round, wild with fury, to see what he could attack. His mahout, still urging him, with no gentle strokes and with wild shouts, to pursue, at length lost his balance in his excitement, as Malleer turned savagely about, and fell to the earth! He fell right before the infuriated beast whom he had been rendering more and more wild and ungovernable. We were not left in doubt as to his fate for a moment. We had just time to see that the man had fallen, and was lying on his back, with his limbs disordered, one leg under him and the other stretched helplessly out, whilst both arms were raised aloft, when we saw the huge foot of the elephant placed upon his chest, and heard the bones crackling, as the whole body of the man was crushed into a shapeless mass!

There was hardly time for a cry; the swaying of his form on the elephant's neck—his fall—the sound caused by his striking the

elastic turf—the foot placed upon him, and the horrid crushing which followed—all was the work of an instant or two. But this did not sate the enraged animal. Still keeping his foot on the man's chest, he seized one arm with his trunk and tore it from the body. In another moment it was hurling high up in the air, the blood spirting from it as it whirled. It was a horrible sight. The other arm was then seized, and was similarly dealt with.

We were all horrified, of course, at the untoward result of our sport, for which nobody was to blame but the elephant; when our alarm and horror were increased at seeing a woman rushing from the side whence Malleer had made his appearance, rushing directly towards the elephant. She had an infant in her arms, and she ran as fast as her burden would permit. The commander-in-chief stood up in the balcony, exclaiming:—

"Here will be more butchery, your majesty. Can nothing be done to prevent it?"

"It is the mahout's wife, I have no doubt," replied the king; "what can be done?"

But the resident had already given the order for the horsemen with their long spears to advance and lead off the elephant;—given

the order, it is true, but the execution of those orders was not an affair of a moment. Time was lost in communicating them—the men had to mount—they must advance cautiously, five on each side. By means of their long spears, they conduct the *must* elephants about, directing the spears against the trunk, which is tender, if the animal is wayward. They are, of course, expert horsemen; and must be prepared to gallop off at a moment's notice, should the animal slip past the spear and advance to attack.

Whilst the spearmen were thus preparing to lead off the elephant, that is, mounting, and then advancing cautiously from either side, the poor woman, reckless of consequences, was running towards the elephant.

"O Malleer, Malleer! cruel, savage beast! see what you have done," she cried; "here finish our house at once. You have taken off the roof, now break down the walls; you have killed my husband, whom you loved so well, now kill me and his son."

To those unaccustomed to India, this language may appear unnatural or ridiculous. It is precisely the sense of what she said; every word of it almost was long impressed upon my

mind. The mahouts and their families live with the elephants they attend, and talk to them as to reasonable beings, in reproof, in praise, in entreaty, in anger.

We expected to see the wild animal turn from the mangled remains of the husband to tear the wife and child asunder. We were agreeably disappointed. Malleer's rage was satiated, and he now felt remorse for what he had done. You could see it in his drooping ears and downcast head. He took his foot off the shapeless carcass. The wife threw herself upon it, and the elephant stood by respecting her grief. It was a touching spectacle. The woman lamented loudly, turning now and then to the elephant to reproach him; whilst he stood as if conscious of his fault, looking sadly at her. Once or twice the unconscious infant caught at his trunk and played with it. He had doubtless played with it often before; for it is no uncommon thing to see the mahout's child playing between the legs of the elephant, —it is no uncommon thing to see the elephant waving his trunk over it, allowing it to go to a little distance, and then tenderly bringing it back again—as tenderly as a mother would.

In the mean time the spearmen were now

advancing. They were mounted on active horses accustomed to the work. They came up on either side; and gently touching the proboscis of the elephant with the ends of their spears, indicated thus what they wanted. Malleer flapped back his long ears, and looked threateningly at them. He might let his mahout's wife pacify him; he was not to be led by them,—you could see the determination in his eye. They touched him again, this time a little more sharply. He threw up his trunk, sounded out a defiant threat, and charged full upon those on his left. They were off in an instant—their horses scampering away with all speed, whilst Malleer pursued. The savage fury of the elephant was gradually returning; and when the band which he had attacked had leaped a wall and were off out of sight, he turned upon the other. It was now their turn to fly, which they did as nimbly as their companions, Malleer pursuing as fast as he could.

"Let the woman call him off," shouted the king; "he will attend to her."

She did so; and Malleer came back, just as a spaniel would do at the call of his master.

"Let the woman mount with her child and take him away," was the king's order. It was

communicated to her. The elephant knelt at her command. She mounted. Malleer gave her, first the mutilated carcass, and then her infant son. She sat upon his neck, in her husband's place, and led him quietly away. From that day she was his keeper, his mahout. He would have no other. When most excited, when most wild, *must* or not *must*, she had but to command, and he obeyed. The touch of her hand on his trunk was enough to calm his most violent outbursts of temper. She could lead him without fear or danger to herself; and the authority which she had thus obtained, doubtless her son would possess after her.

And now that I have given so full an account of the destruction of one mahout, I will describe also the escape of another, whom we all regarded as doomed.

It was in the course of one of these fights, in a garden surrounded by a substantial iron fence, that the incident occurred. As usual, there had been prolonged pushing—a series of incessant pushes—between the two antagonists. When the weaker had given way, he turned abruptly from his foe, and ran round the enclosure pursued by the victor. The order was given to

allow the fugitive to escape. As he left the enclosure, by some accident or other, his mahout fell on the inside. The pursuing elephant did not see him for a little; but, as the monster stood near the only opening, it was impossible for the poor man to escape thereby. It was not long, however—only for a moment or two—that the man remained unobserved by the infuriated animal; and the moment he was seen a chase began. It was impossible to succour him, for the whole affair was the work of a few seconds. At length the elephant came up with the unfortunate man. For their own mahouts they may have some respect, but towards the mahouts of their antagonists they feel nothing but animosity.

The driver of the charging elephant did what he could to turn him from the pursuit of the man; but his efforts were absolutely without avail.

The elephant had his trunk raised ready to attack or strike, when the poor fugitive stood before him in a corner of the iron railing. The elephant thrust forward his head, and pushed with all his might. His tusks projected at each side of the corner in which the man stood, and with his broad forehead he

stood pushing and shoving, with the same short forcible strokes he would have used had he stood opposite to an opposing elephant. The man stood, however—protected by the iron railing against which the massive head of the monster shoved,—stood pressing into the corner, making himself as thin as possible, with his arms stretched by his side.

To us, from a gallery above, it appeared that the poor mahout must have been crushed to death; we could see only the massive back and voluminous haunches of the brawny monster, as he still shoved with trunk erect. But we were mistaken. The man, finding himself unhurt in the corner, gradually slipped down into a sitting posture; the elephant doubtless thinking (for he could not see him) that he was gradually annihilating the mahout as he felt him sink. Once seated, the man made his way adroitly between the fore legs of the huge beast, and thus escaped into the arena. To our surprise we saw him issuing from the feet of the monster, in a stealthy sort of way; not a bone injured, not even a scratch upon his skin. In another moment the man was off, having escaped through the opening of the enclosure; and before the attendants had brought

fireworks and a match to drive off the elephant, the man, whom they must have expected to find a shapeless mass, was safe and sound in their midst!

Strange to say, the most terrible *must* elephant, even when in his most excited condition, may be thoroughly cowed and frightened by letting off fireworks in front of him. A rocket discharged will arrest him in the midst of the most impetuous attack; and he flies terrified from a fizzing Catharine-wheel or harmless collection of crackers. It may, therefore, be supposed that fireworks are always kept ready for explosion when danger is anticipated from the elephants, particularly in the season when they are most unmanageable, and most likely to do harm.

CHAPTER XII.

THE MOHURRIM.

The Sheahs and the Soonnies—Origin of the Mohurrim—The Emanbarra—The lament for Hassan and Hosein—The Durgah—Dhull-dhull—The wedding procession—The tomb—The burial-ground—The funeral rites—Contests at the grave.

It is a strange thing to witness the contrasts presented in the life of the Mussulman population of India at the different periods of the year. The month of Mohurrim—one of the Arabic months—is the anniversary of the death of two early leaders of "the faithful," near relatives of Mohammed himself, Hassan and Hosein, and is observed by more than one-half the Mohammedan population of India, including the court of Lucknow, as a period of deep humiliation and sorrowful remembrance. By more than one-half of the Mohammedan population, because, as every one

knows now-a-days, "the faithful" are divided into two great sects, the Sheahs and the Soonnies, who feel towards each other, in a religious point of view, much as fanatical Protestants and Roman Catholics mutually do. The Turks are Soonnies, the Persians Sheahs —generally speaking, indeed, the western Mussulmans, from the Euphrates to the Atlantic, are Soonnies; the eastern, from the Euphrates to Java, are Sheahs.

The Mohurrim, as the festival is called, scarcely ever passes over in India without contests between the two great parties,—between those who regard the deaths of Hassan and Hosein as barbarous murders on the one side, that is the Sheahs, and those who, on the other, look upon them as having been usurpers, and lawfully put to death by the true head of "the faithful"—the reigning caliph. These latter are the Soonnies.

On the first day of the Mohurrim, the vast Mohammedan population appears to be suddenly snatched away from all interest and employment in the affairs of earth. The streets are deserted, every one is shut up in his house, mourning with his family. On the second, again, the streets are crowded; but with

people in mourning attire, parading along the thoroughfares in funeral procession to the tombs set up here and there as tributes of respect to the memory of Hassan and Hosein. These tombs are representations of the mausoleum at Kerbela, or Meshed, on the banks of the Euphrates, in which the two chiefs were buried; and are either contained in an Emanbarra belonging to a chief, or in the house of some wealthy Mussulman. The tomb-model, or *tazia*, belonging to the king of Oude, was made for his majesty's father in England; it was composed of green glass with gold mouldings, and was regarded as peculiarly holy.

The Emanbarra is usually erected for the purpose of celebrating the Mohurrim, and is not unfrequently intended, as was the king's, for the final resting-place of the heads of the family to which it belongs. The representation of the tomb of Hassan and Hosein is placed, at the period of Mohurrim, against the wall facing Mecca, under a canopy, which consisted, in the royal Emanbarra, of green velvet embroidered with gold. A pulpit is placed opposite, usually of the same material as the model, in which the reader of the ser-

vice,—the officiating priest, as we should call him,—stands with his face to Mecca and his back to the tomb. This pulpit consists simply of a small raised platform, without railing or parapet of any kind, on which the reader sits or stands, as he may find most convenient.

Such is the collection of lustres and chandeliers accumulated on these occasions, the glare of the lights, the sparkling of the rich embroidery and gilding, the glittering of the bullioned fringes, cords, and tassels, ornamenting the banners with which the Emanbarra is hung, the turbaned and bearded figures, with their swarthy countenances expressive of deep-seated grief and humiliation,—that Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali might well observe she has "been frequently reminded in such scenes of the visionary castles conjured up in the imagination by reading the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments.*"* The emblems of Arabic royalty, the embroidered turban, the sun-symbol, and the richly-decorated arms, are always left at the base of the tomb, as evidences of the right of the two youthful

* *Observations on the Mussulmans of India,* vol. i. p. 35.

martyrs to be considered the heads of "the faithful,"—a right denied by those atrocious heretics, the Soonnies.

During the entire period of the Mohurrim, large wax lights, red and green, are kept burning round the tomb, and mourning assemblies are held in the Emanbarra twice a day; those in the evening being by far the most attractive, and the most generally attended. It was a fine thing to see the king, in his splendid mourning suit, and with a crown on his head decorated with feathers from the bird of paradise, taking his place in front of the reader,—his long train of native attendants coming in two by two afterwards, with downcast faces and sorrowing mien, whilst the wax candles and the brilliant chandeliers threw an intense light upon the scene. It was interesting to observe the profound quiet which reigned, until broken by the reader of the service,—some favourite Moluvie; the audience always awaiting the commencement of the reading or the recitation in the same humble and sorrowing attitude in which they entered.

The lights are flaring upon the broad turbans; the glittering interior of the Emanbarra,

with chandeliers and wax tapers, its gilding and its banners, its fringes and its embroideries, is a blaze of light. The preacher is reciting an account of the death of the two chiefs, his keen black eyes glowing with animation as he proceeds,—his audience, at first so solemn and so quietly sad, being gradually wound up to passionate bursts of grief. The orator groans aloud as he recapitulates the disastrous story; his audience is deeply moved. Tears trickle from the eyes of more than one bearded face, sobs and groans issue from the others. At length, as if with a sudden unpremeditated burst, but really at the proper part of the service, the audience utters forth the names "Hassan!" "Hosein!" in succession, beating the breast the while in cadence. At first somewhat gently and in a low tone are the names uttered, but afterwards louder and more loud, until the whole Emanbarra rings again with the excited, prolonged, piercing wail. For fully ten minutes does this burst of grief continue,—the beating of the breast, the loud uttering of the names, the beating ever louder and more resounding, the utterance gradually increasing in shrillness and piercing energy; until in a moment all is

hushed again, and silence, as of deep affliction, falls like a pall upon the assembly.

But man requires refreshments after his labour, whether that labour consist in being whirled across a frozen country with a biting east wind in one's teeth, at the rate of thirty miles an hour, or shouting "Hassan" and "Hosein" for ten minutes in uninterrupted succession, and beating the breast, with the thermometer at ninety. Sherbet is now handed round. The king and the members of his family indulge in that perfection of smoking—the hookah, whilst the others take a savoury stimulant from their belts and proceed to chew it, until the reading of the service recommences, and the time rolls round again for renewed thumping, renewed shouting of "Hassan" and "Hosein," and a renewed respite. At the conclusion a funeral dirge is chaunted, called the *Moorseah;* and being in the vernacular, this portion of the service is much prized by all, because comprehended by all. The Moorseah ended, the whole assembly rises, and recapitulates simultaneously the names of all the true leaders of "the faithful,"—the *Emauns;* ending with curses upon the usurping caliphs.

Such is the service performed daily and nightly at the Emanbarra during the Mohurrim; and in the observance of such religious festivals the king was very particular. He had made a vow in early life that, if ever he came to the throne, he would keep the Mohurrim for forty days, instead of ten, the usual number; and he kept his vow. He lived at such periods entirely with his male Mohammedan relatives or attendants; drinking no wine, giving no dinners, and indulging in none of those luxuries of which he was so fond, and which were regarded as pre-eminently European. His wives had their own Emanbarra within the precincts of the palace, where a female reader went through the service; and I have been assured the beating of the breast, the shouting of "Hassan" and "Hosein," and the cursing of the caliphs, is performed with still more energy in these female assemblies than in those of the males. The ladies reserved all their expressions of suffering and woe for the murdered emauns at this time. "We must not indulge selfish sorrows, when the Prophet's family alone has a right to our tears," was their reply to the inquisitive European lady,* who wished

* Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali.

to know why they seemed, during the Mohurrim, to forget their lost children and their parents.

Nor is it only by their visits to the Emanbarra, and joining in the service, that the Sheah families express their sympathy with, and sorrow for, the sufferings of the lost chiefs. All kind of luxury is put aside during this month of Mohurrim. The commonest and hardest *charpoys*, or a simple mat upon the floor, are substituted for the luxurious cushions and well-wadded mattresses on which they usually recline. Their fare is of the coarsest. Hot curries and savoury pilaws are eschewed, and common barley-bread, rice, and boiled peas, are substituted. The usual ornaments are laid aside,—a great deprivation of the ladies' pleasures and comforts; for the contemplation of her jewellery is one of the most pleasing and constant employments of the Indian belle.

In Lucknow they believe they have the metal crest of the banner of Hosein (conveyed thither long ago by a poor pilgrim from the west), and the relic is regarded as peculiarly sacred. The building in which it is contained is called the *Durgah;* and thither the banners used in

the Mohurrim are brought by thronging multitudes, with great display, upon the fifth day. The Durgah is fully five miles from the king's palace — a magnificent building, a beautiful specimen of that style of architecture which Bishop Heber aptly calls the oriental gothic. In the centre of this building the sacred crest is fixed aloft upon a pole, the whole elevated upon a platform hung round with flags and emblematical devices.

On the morning of the fifth day of Mohurrim, crowds of all ranks and classes of the people might be seen issuing from Lucknow to visit the Durgah, each little party bearing its own banners. On such occasions, the orientals love to display their wealth. The procession from the royal Emanbarra was, of course, the most magnificent. Six or eight elephants, with silver trappings, first appeared, the men upon them bearing the banners to be blessed. A guard of soldiers accompanied the elephants. Then came a sort of chief mourner, bearing a black pole supporting two swords hung from a reversed bow. Then came the king himself, and the male members of his family, with his favourite Moluvies. To these succeeded a charger, called Dhull-dhull, the name of the

horse Hosein rode when he lost his life. A white Arab, of elegant proportions, was usually employed for this purpose, whose reddened legs and sides (from which arrows, apparently buried in his body, projected) indicated the sufferings of both horse and rider. A turban, in the Arabian style, and a bow and quiver of arrows, are fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-dhull; and a beautifully-embroidered saddle-cloth contrasts finely with the spotless white coat of the animal,—the trappings all of solid gold. Attendants, gorgeously dressed, accompany the horse with chowries (for beating away flies) made of the yak's tail. Following Dhull-dhull might be seen troops of the king's servants, regiments of horse and foot, and a crowd of idlers.

The banners are borne through the Durgah, presented to the sacred crest, and touched, and then taken out again at the opposite door to make room for others. All day long does this ceremony continue. Fresh crowds constantly arrive from Lucknow, some waiting till the afternoon in expectation of an easier journey, some delayed by accident. Fifty thousand banners so hallowed in the course of the day I have heard of as being no extraordinary number.

From a burial to a wedding is often but a step in human life, and nowhere is that step shorter than in the East. The Mohurrim, a season of mourning and of grief—of woe, depression, and penance—contains also the representation of a wedding! This wedding is commemorated on the seventh day of the fast, and is called the *Mayndieh.* It is held in remembrance of the marriage of the favourite daughter of Hosein to her cousin Cossim, on the very day that Hosein lost his life at Kerbela. The Mayndieh is a great wedding-procession, which sets out at night;* that of the inferior being directed towards the Emanbarra of the superior,—that of the nawab, or native prime-ministers, usually directing its course, for instance, to the Emanbarra of the king.

The Emanbarra on this day was fitted up, of course, with extraordinary splendour, worthily to receive the expensive and gorgeous Mayndieh; and when the preparations were complete, the public were admitted to gaze upon the glittering although somewhat *bizarre* scene. They crowded the vast hall in thou-

* The *Mayndieh* is the ordinary accompaniment of marriage in the East. It is referred to in the parable of the ten virgins.

sands; some admiring the strangely-varied collection of chandeliers, one of which alone, as I well remember, contained more than a hundred wax-lights; others gazing upon the coloured lamps,—amber, blue, and green; others examining the glittering tomb of the emauns, with its decorations, a huge lion on one side, and the royal arms, two fish *embowed and respecting each other* (as the heralds have it), upon the other. The streaming flags astonished the more lively; and the silver representations of the gates of Mecca, of the tent of Hosein, and of the tombs of Kerbela, all placed upon silver tables, gave ample food for thought and calculations to the more sordid; whilst the variety of arms and armour hung round the walls attracted the attention of the warriors. The whole of the decorations were rather showy and glittering than tasteful, exciting not so much admiration of the beauty of the scene as wonder at the display.

But the roll of musketry without has already announced that the wedding-procession is advancing—a wedding and a burial both performed in one day, and strangely commemorated together; for Cossim was buried the day he was married. The roll of musketry

has sounded, and the king's messengers come in, in great numbers, to clear the hall. They know their duty, and what is expected of them; whilst the people, on their part, still linger around the objects of their contemplations. Hustling and friendly pushing will not do—the gazers have not yet feasted their eyes, and *will* not be hustled out. How London policemen would clear the place of the fierce-looking well-bearded Mussulmans I do not know; but the king's messengers and peons adopt a very summary method of procedure. They have three times announced with a loud voice that the place must be cleared; and still hundreds are gathered round the tombs and round the silver models, and many gaping admirers still contemplate the dazzling lights. There is no time to be lost, and messengers and peons proceed forthwith to enforce the departure of the more tardy. Their bamboos are flourished, and well-thonged whips are produced. Blows resound upon the backs of the lagging gazers,—good sturdy blows often, by no means a joke,—and the recipients growl and move on. Not a loiterer, however, returns the salute—the messengers and the peons have right upon their side; this whipping and flagellation is

the *dustoor*, the custom, and therefore must be right. Occasionally a more than ordinarily severe stroke elicits a sudden facing round of the well-bearded *floggee*; whilst the flogger still flourishes his cane or his whip, and looks the indignant sufferer full in the face. *Donkeys* and *dogs*, and even *pigs* (the most opprobrious of epithets to the ear of a Mussulman), they will call each other in irritated and rapid colloquy; but still the loiterer moves on towards the door, however loudly or fiercely he may retort in words, rubbing the outraged part the while manfully, and wagging his beard violently in indignant remonstrance; without any answering blow, however—no angry retaliation comes from the hand or dagger. Custom has decided the matter, and custom and right are synonymous east of the Indus.

And now all is ready for the wedding-procession, which has been gradually drawing near. The Emanbarra is silent again. The doors by which the people went out are closed, and the vast quadrangle in front, brilliantly lit up, is thrown open. The elephants and horses are left without; but the crowd of soldiers, and bearers of presents, and attendant musicians, almost fill up the spacious square—

the beautifully tesselated pavement is completely hidden.

First, through the lines of soldiers filing to right and left, are borne in the wedding-presents. Richly-decorated attendants advance, carrying silver trays laden with sweetmeats and dried fruits, miniature beds of flowers, and garlands of sweet jasmine; whilst fireworks are let off as they enter the doors. A covered conveyance,—that of the bride,—the exterior of silver, such as is used by the highest of the female nobility, follows the wedding-presents, accompanied by richly-decorated attendants bearing torches. Then come the bands of music, and other torch-bearers; and with glad sounds the whole procession enters, and makes the round of the vast hall. The presents are deposited near the model of the tomb, in readiness to be taken to the place of burial a few days after. But scarcely has the richly-decorated wedding-procession passed into the Emanbarra, when another company, with downcast countenances and in mourning garb, draws nigh. The wedding and the death occurred on the same day, and so the funeral pomp follows hard upon the Mayndieh.

The model of the tomb of Cossim, duly sup-

ported on a bier, is brought in by the attendants, and a sad mourning procession accompanies it. Sometimes even a horse, duly trained for the purpose, accompanies the party. It is regarded as the horse of Cossim, and bears his embroidered turban, his scimitar, his bow and arrows; whilst over it is held a royal umbrella, the emblem of sovereignty, and a gorgeously-worked *aftadah*, or sun-symbol.* The horse, if he be admitted to the interior, is one, of course, upon which dependence can be placed; and makes the round of the spacious hall with a solemnity and steadiness of gait befitting the occasion.

So much for what goes on within, where the usual service succeeds to the processions. But there is a part of the ceremony proceeding without the court-yard, infinitely more to the taste of the populace than the gloom and distress which characterise the principal actors in the funeral scene. Without the court-yard,—for that is a place which may not be desecrated by the great unwashed,—crowds have collected,

* An imitation of the sun, embroidered in gold upon crimson velvet; both sides alike, and fixed upon a circular framework, which is borne aloft upon a gold or silver staff.

of all ages and of both sexes; there is crushing and amusement, laughter and groaning and objurgation, as in all crowds. They are awaiting the distribution of coin, which always accompanies a wedding, and which is never omitted upon the occasion of the Mayndieh commemorating the marriage of Cossim and the daughter of Hosein. Small silver coins are scattered right and left by officers appointed for the purpose, with a lavish expenditure that would astonish the European. It is a part of the religion of the Mussulman to be liberal at such a time, and he cares not for the cost.

It is on record at Lucknow, that one of these Mohurrims cost a reigning nawab upwards of three hundred thousand pounds; the costly nature of the processions and trappings—the munificence to the poor—the lavish display of expensive dresses and appointments, never used again, need not astonish us therefore. The wealth of the Mohammedan population of any part of India may be safely estimated by the displays they make at Mohurrim. Were all this valuable mourning and embroidery, this display of silvering and gilding, to be retained from year to year to be used at each successive Mohurrim, the expense would be

very different. Such, however, is not the case; what has once been used is not permitted to be used again. All is distributed amongst the poor and needy on the conclusion of the fast; so that the populace do not want incitement to make the commemoration of the Mohurrim as enthusiastic as possible.

But we have not yet ended with the season of gloom and despondency. All these services at the Emanbarras—all this consecration of banners, and parading of wedding and funeral processions, is but preliminary to a final display of a still more imposing character. The chiefs lie dead—their deaths alone have been hitherto commemorated—that is, the deaths of Hassan and Hosein. The funeral and the burial have yet to come; for this funeral vast preparations have been made, whilst for the burial, an imitation of the burial-ground at Kerbela has been duly set apart by each family of large possessions ages before.

These burial-grounds are all at a considerable distance from the walls of the town; and at the earliest dawn of day the populace issues forth in thousands, to witness or to take part in the various ceremonies which accompany the burial of the tomb-models, together with

the food and other articles always put into a Mohammedan grave.

As the funeral of Hosein was a military spectacle, so, on this occasion, is every endeavour made to give as military a character as possible to the display. Banners are exhibited, bands play, matchlocks and guns and pistols are fired off, shields are clashed together, and no sound is wanting which serves to bring before the mind's eye the mimicry of military pageants. The poor man, with his little company, falls into the rear of the rich man's larger assembly, that he may get on the faster thereby; for the crowds are dense, and the smaller bands have no little difficulty in making a way for themselves. Besides, some of those heretical Soonnies may be lying in wait, to attack or to interrupt; for they, miserable unbelievers! regard the whole display as worse than foolish, as almost impious, in fact.

Each procession is marshalled much in the same order; first, the consecrated banners, carried aloft upon long poles, the bearers of the poles usually seated in an elephant-howdah. The larger displays will have two or three, or even six elephants so employed. A band of music, discoursing such dirges as their

instruments will accomplish and custom prescribes, follows the elephants;—where all are playing, procession jostling procession, company pressing against company, each with its band, it may be easily imagined that the sounds produced are not of the most harmonious. The sword-bearer,—with the two glittering blades hung aloft upon a black pole, and suspending beneath a reversed bow, near its summit,—comes after the band. He is supported by men on each side, who also bear aloft black poles, to which are attached streamers of long black unspun silk.

Then comes the horse—Dhull-dhull—as on the former occasion of the consecration of the banners, attended by numerous servants. Two grooms hold the bridle, one upon either side; an officer marches at his head with the sun-symbol; another holds over him a royal umbrella; others accompany him with gilt and silvered staves, whilst running messengers follow with small triangular green banners. The chain armour, gold-embroidered turban, sword and belt, are all fixed upon the saddle of Dhull-dhull; whilst often the owner of the animal, and head of the procession, walks after the horse as a sort of chief mourner. A walk of some miles

amid such steaming crowds is by no means a pleasant journey.

The bearers of incense, in gold and silver censers, succeed. The censers are suspended by means of chains made of the same material, and are thus waved to and fro, as the march proceeds,—much as they are waved at the foot of the altar in Roman Catholic cathedrals on the continent. The *lahbaun*, a sweet-smelling resin, which is burnt in the censers, is probably the very frankincense so frequently mentioned in the Bible. The reader of the funeral service follows, usually attended by the proprietor of the tomb-model and his friends. Always barefooted, and often without any covering upon their heads, do these mourners follow in sad procession. It is no unusual thing to see their heads disfigured with chaff and dust,—the more striking symbols of profound grief.

The tomb-model, or tazia, is borne next; above which a canopy of green cloth or velvet, embroidered with gold or silver in the more showy processions, is spread, elevated upon poles, and carried by several men stationed at the side. The model of Cossim's tomb; the covered conveyance of his bride; the trays of wedding-

presents, with all the other accompaniments of the marriage-procession, follow in order; and lastly, camels and elephants, bearing representations of the tent-equipage and warlike train of Hosein, as he marched from Medina to Kerbela.

These are all the parts of the procession proper; but, in addition to these, oriental charity always demands a train of elephants, the howdahs on which are filled with confidential servants distributing bread and money amongst the poor. The bread so distributed is believed by the Mussulman ladies to possess certain peculiar virtues of its own, very superior to those of the ordinary staff of life. They will commission their servants to bring them a morsel of such, even though they may themselves distribute, or cause to be distributed, large quantities! Its being given on the great day of the Mohurrim constitutes it holy, sacred, and peculiar.

All along the march, as the various processions wind by different roads over the country, guns, pistols, rifles, and matchlocks, are discharged; whilst the mourning cry, "Hassan!" "Hosein!" is heard at intervals swelling out from the mighty throng.

The ordinary ceremony of burial is gone through on the procession reaching the appointed place—the model of the burial-ground at Kerbela. The tomb-model, with its various accompaniments of wedding-trays and wedding-presents—fruits, flowers, and incense—all are committed to the earth, a grave having been previously prepared for the purpose. It is at this part of the ceremony that the long pent-up animosity between the Sheahs and the Soonnies usually finds vent, and the mimic burial is often made the occasion of loss of life and bloody feuds between the contending factions.

It must be remembered, that this fast of the Mohurrim is quite distinct from the Ramazan. The Ramazan—a period of thirty days, during which all "the faithful" abstain from eating, drinking, and smoking, between sunrise and sunset—is observed by all classes of Mohammedans, by the Indian Mussulman on the banks of the Ganges, equally with the Fezzan on the shores of the Atlantic in Northern Africa. The Mohurrim, however, is peculiar to the Sheahs, and properly only extends over ten days. The devout commemorate it for forty, just as the zealots of both

sects will fast during the month preceding and that succeeding the Ramazan.

During such periods, as I have already remarked, we seldom saw the king in private. He held his durbar as usual, and we were in attendance; but often even this would be intermitted, and all public business suspended for the time being. Did we require an audience of his majesty, to lay any matter of urgency before him, which was an unusual thing, we saw him when he was dressing,—in the hands of his European favourite, having his hair dressed.

On one occasion, in one of those mad freaks which despotic power and defective early training had made habitual with him, he attended the Emanbarra, during the Mohurrim, in his ordinary European dress, his black London hat in his hand. The act was regarded as a great scandal by the Mussulmans, and profound heads and long beards were shaken solemnly as the owners discoursed about it. We, the European members of the household, were just as ready to condemn such conduct, and to advise his majesty to adopt a different course, as his native counsellors; but advice was thrown away,—counsel was lost upon him, unless it coincided with the whim of the moment. I am

aware that in the residency we were regarded as the suggesters of all these mad freaks. The resident knew as well what went on in the palace as we did; but he could never know whether any such escapade was the result of the king's own caprice, or the suggestion of the "favourites." He believed the latter; and the *Calcutta Review*, as well as other Indian periodicals, has since most unjustly denounced us as the aiders and abettors of extravagances which we should have prevented if we could, and which we often condemned as heartily as our vilifiers.

CHAPTER XIII.

FAREWELL TO LUCKNOW.

The barber again—The king's uncles—His majesty's treatment of them—Cruelty—Indignation—Departure from the dinner-table—The barber goes to Calcutta—Virtuous resolutions of the king—The barber's return and triumph—Our dismissal.

THE circumstances which led to my departure from Lucknow, and not mine only, but that of another member of the household, higher in the king's esteem than ever I was, will not take long to tell. The influence of the barber was daily becoming greater. It was very perceptible that the hero of the curling-tongs was in fact the real ruler of Oude; and even the attention of the resident was gradually being directed to the subject. No one could live in Lucknow, in fact, without being aware, that if any man wished to succeed at court he must first win the favour of the barber. Several causes conduced to this ascendency.

The low depraved tastes which the king had contracted during years of unrestrained indulgence, and an almost boundless command of wealth, were just those which the barber found it his interest to foster and encourage. He made himself necessary to the king; and he had the art, whilst he really led and suggested, always to appear to follow and to *be* led. Every bottle of wine or beer consumed in the palace put something into his pocket; it was his interest, therefore, to prevent the king's reformation in respect of drunkenness. Every favoured slave, every dancing-girl who attracted the king's notice, paid tribute of his or her earnings into the open palm of the barber. Even the nawab, and the commander-in-chief of the king's forces, found it their interest to conciliate the reigning favourite with valuable presents. Can it be wondered at, then, that he fostered abuses by which he thrived, when his low sordid nature is taken into consideration?

To us of the king's household these abuses were apparent enough; and I believe we were all honestly anxious to correct them. The will was there, but the means were wanting; and though we consulted together on the subject,

yet no feasible plan presented itself. One of the most influential took it upon him to remonstrate with the king upon his continual inebriety; and he swore, fumed, was calmed, promised amendment, and forgot his promise. By such means the hands of the barber were strengthened only, not at all weakened,—that was quite plain.

That a strong feeling of enmity prevailed between the king and his uncles, I have already had occasion to observe. He never forgave them for having conspired, together with his father, to prevent his gaining the musnud. When he invited any one of them to his private dinners, it was usually that they might become intoxicated and be insulted. The facts I am about to relate may appear scarcely credible; but they are literally true. Such scenes cannot fade from the memory; and I shall describe them as they occurred.

One of these aged uncles was invited to the king's private table. He was well plied with wine, and forced unwillingly to drink far more than he could well stand. The barber saw that the king enjoyed the poor old man's distress at the condition into which he himself perceived he was fast falling.

"Let us have a Scotch reel," suggested the little hero of the comb and brush; "and I will dance with Saadut." Saadut was the king's uncle.

His majesty was delighted. He seized at the idea forthwith. "Good, good," he cried, as he pushed back his chair and prepared for the dance,—"good, good, let the khan dance with my dear uncle."

The whole room was forthwith in an uproar. The dancing-girls continued their performances at one end, whilst the king pretended to dance, as he watched the fiendish little barber and his uncle. The poor old man was helpless in the brawny arms of the favourite, and was whirled round and round until he could hardly stand. The king laughed until tears stood in his eyes. During an interval in the wild reel, the barber knocked off the turban of the old uncle. Amongst natives, the loss of the turban is an indelible disgrace. Drunken as he was, the panting grey-headed old man was wroth at the insult, and felt for his tulwar.

In an instant that too was seized by the barber, and taken from him before he could draw it; then his belt, then his shawl-girdle,

then his outer coat of cloth-of-gold. Article after article of clothing was torn from him. Two of us offered to protect the helpless old man. The king was furious at our interference.

"Stand back, gentlemen; let the fun proceed, or, by heaven, I shall put you in arrest," shouted the half-drunken sovereign, still delighted with the performances of his favourite.

In a few minutes the grey-headed old man stood in the centre of the apartment divested of every particle of clothing—a laughing-stock for the king and his detestable minion and the attendant slaves. He was struck, too; not violently, but in jeering mockery, by his wild torturers. It was a pitiable sight to see him, covering his face with his hands, and shedding bitter tears, drunk though he was, at his disgrace.

"And we sat by to see all that done—sat by without interfering!" you exclaim naturally, good reader. We made the effort to interfere more than once, and were roughly ordered to desist; nay, stout swordsmen were even ordered up into the apartment to prevent our interference. At length we could stand it no longer, but indignantly took our leave,

giving the king but scanty courtesy as we did so; nor was the king disposed to be over-courteous to us, for he resented our interference.

What went on after we left the apartment we heard subsequently. The king insisted upon the poor old man dancing as he then was, and the barber was his partner; whilst servants, male and female, of all grades, collected together to witness the humiliation of the king's uncle. The revel continued until Nussir felt too much the influence of the wine he had taken to continue it any longer. Then, and only then, was the persecuted man released.

In native states such as Oude the king is every thing; his nearest relatives are of no more consequence or importance than the meanest of the people. A man who chances to please the king with a song, or a girl who captivates him with a dance, is more honoured and attended to than the king's brother or mother. Possessing absolute power of life and death, the sovereign must not be thwarted in his fits of merriment and cruelty, or it fares worse for the poor sufferers afterwards. What was intended as a short-lived jest, may become

a long-continued source of suffering, if the anger of majesty is roused, particularly if roused by Europeans; for he cannot wreak his vengeance on the latter, and so it falls with double force upon the poor native. When Buktar Singh was ordered to be decapitated for his senseless witticism, as narrated in a previous chapter, his only fear was, that we of the European household should interfere in his behalf. "Had you done so," he subsequently remarked to me, "no power on earth could have saved my life."

Such, then, was the treatment of the king's uncle Saadut, on the occasion I have described. We were witnesses before that to a similar scene. The victim then, however, was a youthful dancing-girl, not a grey-headed old man; and although she protested and exclaimed, nay, fought in her own defence, yet the barber, the agent and instigator in both cases, succeeded in making the king very merry at the plight to which he reduced her. Her nominal husband was one of the singers in the room at the time,—for the nautch-girls are always accompanied by singers; and the wretch, when he saw that the freak was pleasing to his majesty, lent his assistance to the barber. So

complete is the demoralization of men who attend about the courts of absolute monarchs!

These instances were bad enough, and we showed the king that we regarded them as witless cruelties,—nay, that we were indignant at them; but he cared little for our disapprobation or our indignation. What happened afterwards was worse.

Another of the uncles, Asoph by name, more infirm and aged than Saadut, was invited to join the king's dinner-party. We assembled in an ante-room, waiting for the two *great* men of the court, the king and the barber. Asoph was with us; and taking me a little aside, he spoke softly, so as not to be overheard.

"What does the king want with me?" he asked.

"Only to dine with him, I believe," was my answer.

"Alas, am I not old? is not my hair grey, and my eye watery? I am not a companion for my nephew, who is young and fond of pleasure."

There was a pathos in the old man's words, as he gave utterance to his complaint in musical Hindustani. I was touched with his sorrow.

"Do not fear, "I replied; "the king entertained your son the other day, and treated him well."

"My son was not in Oude when Nussir's father died, nor when Ghazi-u-deen made us promise to oppose his son's elevation to the throne. Nussir has no spite against my son. Would to God he would let me live at home in peace and quietness! Has he not all Lucknow, and what it contains, to make him happy?"

The king approached, leaning upon the arm of his favourite, and saluted us right royally as he entered; for there was a certain dignity about him. He fixed his keen black eyes upon Asoph and me, and drew near to us.

"Welcome, my uncle Asoph," said he, extending his hand; "we have missed you too long at our table."

"Your slave is honoured by your majesty's smile," said Asoph, timidly taking the proffered hand.

"Let me lead you to the table myself, Asoph," said the king, as they walked off.

We followed. Every thing was as usual. The king occupied his elevated arm-chair at the middle of one side of the table. We sat in our accustomed places to the right and left

of him. Asoph was placed exactly opposite the king; no one else sitting upon that side, which was usually left unoccupied for the convenience of the servants, and that his majesty might see the dancing, the puppet-shows, the jesters, the tumblers, the cock-fights, or whatever other amusement might be prepared for the evening's entertainment. When the king invited any native to the table, he usually occupied the place in which Asoph now sat, facing his majesty.

A bottle of Madeira was opened, and placed beside Asoph. The soup was despatched, the fish came, the more substantial viands were brought. The king drank wine with Asoph; and the old man seemed reassured, and quaffed his wine with gusto, stroking his long wiry grey moustache, after his habit when pleased.

"You do not drink wine with my uncle," said the king to one of our little party, and then in succession to each of us. Asoph drank his glass of wine at each challenge, and seemed to enjoy it. After the fourth or fifth replenishing, however, he put down his glass half-empty only. The king noticed it, and, looking his uncle full in the face, asked somewhat sternly:

"Is not the wine good at my table?"

Asoph declared it was excellent, as he drank the portion he had left.

The dinner proceeded, and at length the dessert was placed upon the table; and with the dessert came the usual amusements—tumblers and the nautch-girls were those of that night. They were little attended to by the king, however; his eyes were fixed upon Asoph.

The bottle of Madeira which had been originally placed before him was now nearly empty.

"Do you not see that Asoph Nawab wants wine?" said the king, turning to the barber; "get him another bottle."

A meaning look passed between the favourite and his master, as the former went to get a bottle for the old man. It was in vain that Asoph protested that he did not want any more, stroking down his moustache harder than ever; he was not comfortable then, and yet he was exhilarated with the wine he had taken.

There were plenty of servants about. The barber's going out to get a bottle convinced me that some treachery was intended. Subsequent inquiries elucidated the matter. The

bottle brought in for the doomed Asoph was half-brandy, half-madeira. The servant, who had assisted the barber, himself confessed the fact to me.

The king gave various toasts, and was in great vein. Asoph was forced to drink, and gradually lost all power of directing himself. He sat unsteadily in his arm-chair, his head now bowing to the right, now to the left, as he tried hard to keep his eyelids from falling. He was soon nearly blind drunk.

The king was delighted; and turning in a pleasant way to his favourite, made some observation about the drooping head of the unfortunate old man.

"His moustache wants arranging now," was the barber's reply, as he half rose.

"Go, good khan, and settle it; chuck it into its place vigorously," said the king laughing.

The barber rose, and pulled the long moustache at either side ruthlessly, turning the head, as he did so, first one way, then the other. It was barbarous usage for any one; but particularly for an aged, infirm, grey-headed man. We exclaimed against it, two of us half-rising from our chairs as we did so. The king turned

upon us furiously. "Leave your places at your peril!" he exclaimed; "is not the old pig my uncle? I and the khan shall do with him as we please."

It was useless to interfere,—worse than useless; it might but bring down greater punishment upon the luckless old man. Asoph's head still moved unsteadily. He had opened his eyes widely, smarting with pain at the violent wrench given to his moustache; but soon relapsed into his old nodding see-saw motion. Drunkenness had quite overpowered him. For a little the king seemed intent upon the performance of the tumblers and the dancing-girls, his brows still knit and his eyes angry. He had not forgotten our exclamations.

The old man's head, as it moved from side to side, obstructed the king's vision occasionally.

"His head must be kept quiet, d—n him," shouted the irritated sovereign.

The barber was on his feet in a moment. He procured a piece of strong fine twine, and with it he approached the drunken Asoph. Dividing the twine into two equal parts, he tied one end of each piece firmly in each moustache. We could not conceive what his object was.

The king looked on delighted. The ingenuity of the thing pleased him. A man who had not been accustomed to wield the razor, the comb and brush, and the curling-tongs, would never have tied those pieces of cord so firmly in the long wiry hair. But what was to be done with the other ends? We were not left long in doubt. The old man opened his eyes once or twice during the operation, and uttered inarticulate sounds. But the wine and brandy he had taken were too powerful for him; and he speedily relapsed into unconsciousness.

We were not left long in doubt as to the intention of the barber. He tied the ends of the twine, one to each arm of the chair, on which the old man sat, — tied them firmly, caring little to what inconvenience he put the king's uncle. The performances of the nautch-girls and the tumblers went on as before. They appeared to pay no attention to what passed at the table.

The king clapped his hands, and laughed loudly at the ingenious device of his favourite. With each moustache tied firmly to an arm of the chair on which he sat, Asoph's head drooped in drunken lethargy upon his breast. The king whispered the favourite after a little.

The little man rose and left the apartment. I felt convinced that some new cruelty was being practised, and looked meaningly at my friend, —he who had introduced me into Nussir's service,—the most influential European at court, the barber always excepted. He saw my indignant glance, and understood it. For a moment he sat irresolute; and then rising, said calmly to the king,—

"I will release your majesty's uncle. This is disgraceful."

"Leave the room!" shouted the king, enraged beyond all bounds, and stamping as he spoke; "leave the room, sir! Am I not master in my own house? in my own palace? Leave the room; and any other gentleman who is disposed to interfere between me and my uncle may accompany you."

I rose, bowed, and followed my friend. The idea of using force was ridiculous. We retreated together to the door of the apartment, and left the room. We heard subsequently what occurred after our departure. The barber reappeared with some fireworks just after we had left. The fireworks were let off under the old man's chair. The legs of the unfortunate uncle were scorched and burnt; and he seized the

arms of the chair with his hands, and started to his feet. Two locks of hair were torn from his upper lip as he did so, and a portion of the skin with them. The blood flowed freely from the wound, and the drunkenness of the sufferer disappeared. He left the room, thanking the king for his entertainment, and regretting that the bleeding of his nose prevented him from remaining. All this was dissimulation. He knew that he had been barbarously treated —knew it right well; but he was too good a courtier to allow his indignation to appear.

The king laughed louder than ever; but his European friends were silent. None laughed at all but the barber; and then even he seemed alarmed at the result of his freak. There was little merriment at the royal table during the rest of that night, and the king retired early.

As for my friend and me, we had gone direct to Constantia, the residence built by General Martine, and now appropriated to travellers as an eastern *serai*, where rooms are to be had free of cost, but no attendance or food. We had gone there to secure apartments; for we were living in the king's houses, and expected an order to vacate them and

leave his service forthwith. No such order came, however.

The insults so frequently received at the king's hands had at length roused the active enmity of all his family. The retainers of his uncles and cousins became the terror of the king's servants. All Lucknow was in an uproar. The royal troops were beaten by the insurgents; and the king demanded assistance of the resident;—the Company's troops at the cantonments would soon reduce the rebels to order. The resident refused to allow of their being so employed, remonstrated with the king, and advised him to come to some accommodation with his relatives, offering himself to be the mediator.

After a week of utter confusion all was arranged. The durbars were held as usual, and we resumed our stations in the household, our previous absence passing unnoticed.

It was not more than a fortnight after this when the barber was sent by the king on a mission to Calcutta. I forget its immediate object, probably to procure new lustres, or chandeliers, or wine. Now or never, thought we, is the time to overthrow the barber—now or never. My introducer to the court had

been one of the most intimate friends of the king; and he was determined to make a vigorous effort, during the absence of the favourite, to prevent the king relapsing into his old habits on the barber's return. In many private conversations he represented forcibly the evil that was being done, as well to the reputation as to the health of his majesty himself, by his continual inebriety. The king listened to it all like a whipped school-boy; nay, even shed tears more than once.

"It is true—it is too true," he would exclaim, "I am a drunkard, a d—d drunkard; and every body knows it. But it's all the khan's doing. Wallah, but he does what he likes with me!"

After many such conversations, the king determined that, on the barber's return, he should be kept in his own station—that he should not again be permitted to join our party at dinner; that, in fact, he was to be favourite no longer. This resolution was communicated to us all by the king himself; and we congratulated him on it, assuring him that his own dignity, the honour of his kingdom, and, what he valued far more, his health, required this change.

"Gentlemen," said he, knowingly, "you don't know how firm I can be when I like. I'll show the khan—fat pig that he is—that I am not going to be led by the nose any longer; you shall see, you shall see—let us have a glass of claret now."

For a week after this resolution was formed we dined constantly at the royal party, and no one left the table in a state of intoxication. The court of Oude was becoming quite moral and respectable.

At length the news was brought to us one morning that the barber had arrived in Lucknow the preceding night. We were most anxious to know what would be the result. It was quite true; the barber had arrived, and attended the king early that very morning. We attended the private durbar. The king's head was in the hands of the favourite. The ringlets had been all lost during his absence. I thought I saw a sneer of triumph on the countenance of the little man as we entered. He saluted us cordially, however; and we returned his salutation. The king asked him of Calcutta, of his purchases, of the governor-general, of the shipping, of the steamers; and the barber answered with his wonted discretion.

"I fear the king will never keep his promise," said my friend, as we walked together towards our elephant to return home.

"If he does not, our days in Lucknow are numbered," was my reply.

"Yes," he answered, "it would be impossible to remain here, if things go on as they have been. No honest man could stand it."

It was decided between us that, if the barber took his usual place at the table that day, I should also take mine, to see the result, whilst my friend should refuse to join the party.

There was no doubt that evening in our mind that the barber had resumed all his former influence—no doubt whatever. We saw the king approach the ante-room, leaning on his arm as before. My friend left at once, and returned to his house on the other side of the Goomty.

We entered the dining-room as usual after the king. He affected not to have observed the absence of one of his principal courtiers until we were seated at the table.

"Where is our friend?" he asked.

"He has returned home, your majesty," was my reply.

"Ha—has he so? Wallah, but that was badly done! Let him be sent for."

A messenger was despatched across the river forthwith to my friend's house in the park. The dinner proceeded—the barber occupying his usual place, and performing his usual duties.

The messenger returned.

"Where is he?" asked the king.

"The saheb sent his compliments and duty to the 'refuge of the world,'" said the *hurkaru*, or messenger, "and begs to be excused."

"By my father's beard, but he shall not be excused! Go back, you dog, and tell him he *must* come."

The messenger salaamed low, and departed again.

The more substantial viands gave place to curry and rice. The savoury dish was perfuming the dining-room when the *hurkaru* again entered.

"Well!" shouted the king in an angry voice; for the messenger was salaaming instead of speaking.

"The saheb hopes that the 'asylum of the universe' will not command him to come;

the 'asylum of the universe,' says the saheb, knows why his slave cannot come." Such was the message.

The king struck his fork down violently upon the table. He always did so when vexed.

"Go back, go again," he exclaimed vehemently, "and tell the saheb I shall come myself and bring him here, if he does not come. He would not treat his own king so; why does he me? Go, go."

A third time the messenger departed. Dessert was on the table, and a puppet-show was endeavouring to delight the "asylum of the world" when he returned again. This time, however, the saheb heralded his own approach; and the messenger contented himself with advancing to the threshold, as though he should say, There he is; you see I have brought him.

"Come," said the king when he saw him, "come, my friend, sit down, and take a glass of wine with me. There has been trouble enough to bring you here;" and the king pointed as he spoke to the vacant seat.

"Your majesty must pardon me," was the reply; "I told your majesty I should never sit down to table again with *that* man," pointing to the barber, "and I will not."

"Pooh, pooh! nonsense! my friend. Sit down, sit down. Bring a bottle of champagne for us."

But it was in vain that the king coaxed. The indignant Englishman was not to be wheedled, and replied firmly, again reminding the king of his promise.

"Boppery, bopp!" exclaimed the distressed sovereign, "but what trouble you give me!" Here his majesty rose from his chair; and ordering the barber and the captain of the guard to follow, he took the refractory courtier with him into an adjoining ante-room.

A long conversation was the result—criminating and recriminating on both sides. The barber threw himself upon the goodness of the king; the refractory saheb took care to remind his majesty of his plighted word; the captain tried to act as peacemaker. As to the king, he was perplexed, and said little or nothing. At length he proposed that they should all join him in the dining-room in tumbler-bumpers of champagne, and therein drown their quarrels. To this my friend would by no means consent; and the king then, feeling that he had exhausted all means of reconciliation, sighed, swore a little, threatened, took

the barber's arm, and walked into the dining-room. The captain of the guard followed. The refractory courtier returned home.

"He is gone," said the king, looking round the room again.

"His place can be easily supplied," suggested the favourite.

"Let him go, d—n him; to be sure it can." And there it appeared as if the matter ended. But it was not to end there. My turn was to come next.

As the king's eye looked over the guests at his table, it rested upon me. I was watching him at the time. Our eyes met. He turned quickly from me, and putting his hand towards a bottle, muttered something about a glass of wine. I filled my glass, and the king filled his. His hand was on it, his head was turned towards me again; but with a pleasant expression no longer. His eyes flashed angrily. I raised my glass, and was muttering as usual, "God bless your majesty,"—such was the etiquette. But before the sentence was uttered, the king pettishly pushed his glass from him, spilling the wine, whilst he thundered forth in an angry tone, "No, sir, I will not drink wine with you. You are a friend of his."

"Your majesty was a friend of his but yesterday," was my reply, "and told him then how much you valued him."

"Do you hear him?" exclaimed the irritated despot; "do you hear him? Why does he dare to speak to me that way?"

"Your majesty is fond of Englishmen," I replied; "they speak their mind sometimes. But my presence is distasteful; I have delayed too long."

I arose as I spoke, and walked towards the door. I heard the king swearing and striking the table as I went out.

That very night my friend received an order to leave the king's house, in which he lived. The messengers were commanded to throw his property out of it if he delayed; but the nawab was not disposed to execute these orders harshly. He had a wholesome fear of Europeans; and his servants assisted in removing the various articles to Constantia, where apartments had already been taken for the discarded courtier and his family.

As for me, my removal was speedily accomplished. Unencumbered as I was by wife or family, I was not long in having every thing I possessed removed. Before morning dawned

we were both lodged in Constantia, and had placed ourselves under the protection of the resident, who communicated with the nawab on the subject, reminding him that for any injury that befel us he should be held responsible.

We remained quietly together for a few days in Constantia. When our arrangements had all been made, we sailed down the Goomty to the Ganges, and were speedily on our way to Calcutta.

Such was the end of my experience of royal favour. A few words only are necessary to complete the tale of Nussir's life.

The power of the barber waxed daily greater. His pride increased with his power; and no limits were set to the caprices and wild pranks of despotic authority and reckless depravity combined. The scenes which occurred in the palace were whispered over India. "His majesty might one hour be seen," said the *Calcutta Review*, "in a state of drunken nudity with his boon companions, and the low menial who was his chief confidant; at another he would parade the streets of Lucknow, drunk at midday, driving one of his own elephants. All decency and propriety

were banished from the court. Such was more than once his conduct at this period, that Colonel Lowe, the resident, refused to see him, or to transact business with his minions."

This state of things could not long continue. The energetic remonstrances of the resident at length forced the king to part with his favourite, the barber, who left Lucknow, it is said, with 240,000*l*. But sending away the favourite was signing his own death-warrant. His family soon obtained influence in the palace—the king was poisoned; and one of the very uncles whom he had treated so badly, a cripple, succeeded him on the musnud.

THE END.

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